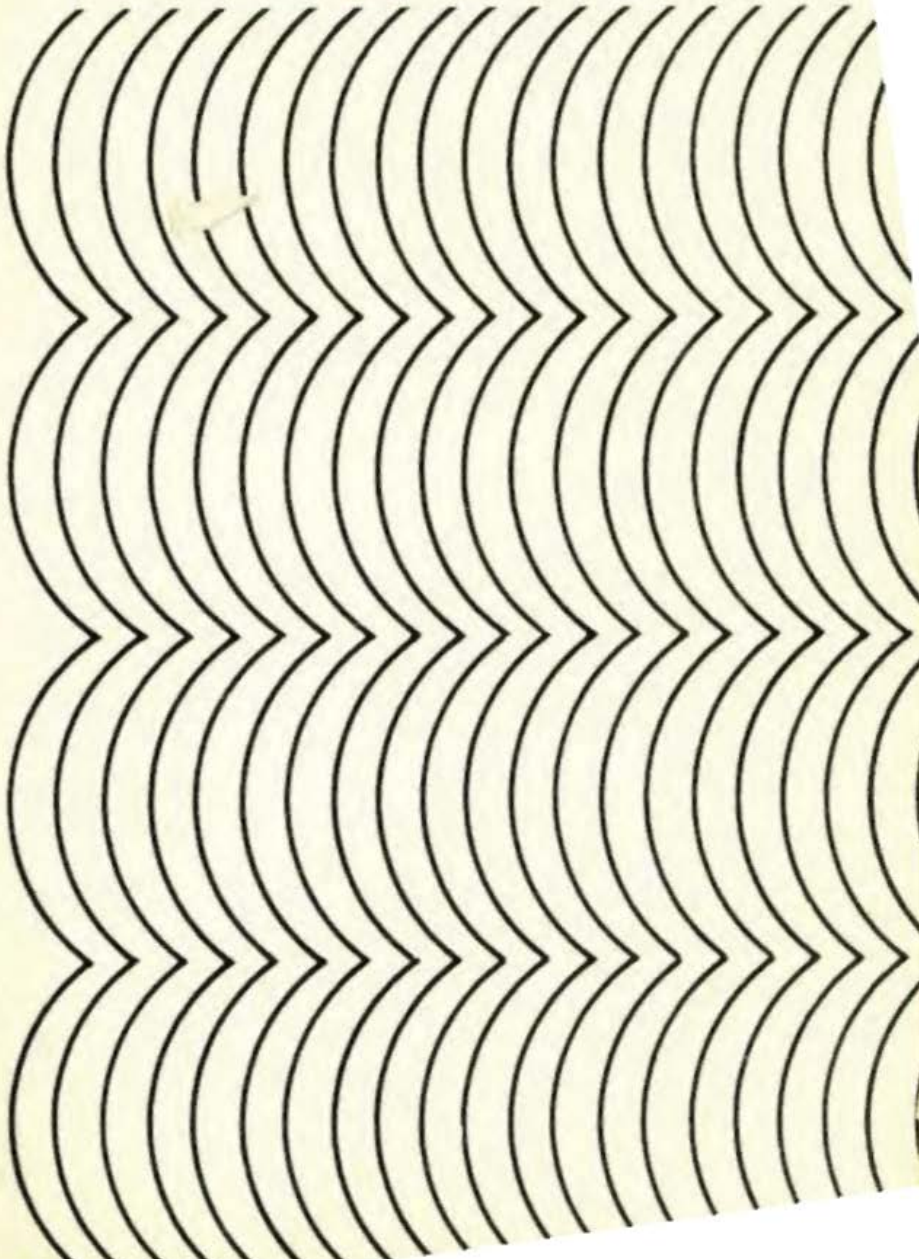
THE HAUNTING MELODY

THEODOR REIK

Psychoanalytic Experiences in Life and Music



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The Haunting Melody

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THE HAUNTING MELODY

THE HAUNTING MELODY

PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPERIENCES IN LIFE AND MUSIC

By Theodor Reik

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TO NORA

Tuning Up

WE PSYCHOLOGISTS frown at surprising facts which disturb the beautiful security that our science has bestowed on us. Peace of mind is dear to us, and we are not eager to be astonished by new and unknown things. Anatole France asserted that the vice of curiosity is foreign to the nature of the true scholar (*"Les savants ne sont pas curieux"*).

An experience at the end of 1925 (it will be described in one of the following chapters) compelled me to turn my interest to a psychological problem that had scarcely been dealt with in research: What does it mean when some tune follows you, occurs to you again and again so that it becomes a haunting melody? Or, reduced to a simpler and more general form: What does it mean when a melody occurs to you in the middle of thoughts of a quite different kind, when your mind is occupied with rational considerations and aim-directed thoughts? After I had reached a provisional and superficial solution of that little problem, I would have liked to dismiss it as insignificant and of minor interest, but it did not release me. In the twenty-eight years since, I often returned to it for shorter or longer times, in the intervals between other research that appeared more urgent to me. In this long time I made some interesting observations on myself and others, collected instances in psychoanalytic practice and in everyday-life and asked other psychologists about their experiences.

The easiest and quickest way to find a satisfactory solution seemed to ask musicians about the problem, and I did so. The experiences they conveyed to me were sometimes similar to my own and to those of other people I had observed, but sometimes so different in their mental and emotional character that they seemed to be entirely

foreign. Musicians often connect melodies with thought associations which would never occur to those of us who are not experts in their art. They sometimes have images and ideas we would never think of when we hum a melody, and they speak a technical language we laymen do not understand. (Some African tribes call books, very nicely, "speaking paper." A score is, for musicians, a singing and sounding paper that allows them to hear an orchestra when they read it.)

Musicians are building strange thought bridges from reality to their lofty realm. Here, I'll mention only two examples, taken from the workshop of composers: Brahms's G Major Septet for string instruments presents his farewell to a woman he had loved, Agathe von Siebold. The young composer expresses his devotion to the singer in the notes, A,G,A(T),H,E, that form her name, interwoven in the second theme of the first movement. What an odd play of emotional expression! Carl Maria von Weber, the composer of *Freischütz* and *Oberon*, once returned home late at night with his friend Roth. They passed a restaurant whose many tables and chairs were piled up, their legs turned upwards. "Look!" said the composer, pointing out the spectacle of those table and chair legs. "Does this not look like a great victory march? I can use that!" The march from *Oberon* was thus conceived.

Psychology of the old school would probably discuss the problem of musical associations and of the haunting melody under the heading of musical memory, in chapters dealing with auditory, motor and visual images or with the processes of retention, recall and recognition. But the two phenomena are almost never mentioned, and the discussion of others akin to them scarcely scratches the surface. There is not much to say about the contributions to the problem from this side, and the less said, the better.

And psychoanalysis? Freud touches the problem only once in a few sentences of *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and his followers have, as far as I know, never picked up the tiny thread of that isolated passage. I have endeavored to march a few steps farther into the unexplored territory of musical associations.

Enough of tuning up! The audience threatens to become restive and a voice—that of the Duke in *Twelfth Night*—commands: "Give me some music. Now, good morrow, friends."

New York, May 13, 1953.

PART ONE

Off-Stage Music

CHAPTER I

Overture

ONE

THE HISTORIANS of music tell us that the original form of the overture was a fanfare whose purpose was to command silence and to make an end to the noisy conversation of the audience. It was originally not a transcribed, but an improvised piece. Later on it became an introductory composition that attempted to prepare listeners for the character of the opera. In later phases of its evolution, it contained some musical themes that would appear in the work itself.

Like the old type of overture, this introductory chapter starts from a fanfare-like question which, so far as I know, has not yet been raised: Why does music play no role in the work of Freud, which was to the greatest extent based on impressions received by hearing? In the fifteen volumes of his collected writings music is only mentioned three or four times. In his psychoanalytic practice, his own musical associations or those of his patients were scarcely noticed. This question has a considerable bearing on the problems we shall deal with, because the musical aspect in analytic work has been neglected by almost all analysts.

Personal characteristics of Freud were responsible for the lack of interest and attention paid to musical impressions. It is certain that he heard very little music in the first four years he spent in the little town of Freiburg in Moravia. We know how important the impres-

sions of those early years are for the development of musical sensitivity and interest. Then, besides this factor, there were in Freud's case psychological reasons that prevented the development of a love of music. He himself gives significant information about those reasons in a passage whose psychological and biographical importance has been overlooked. He declared that works of art, especially those of literature and sculpture, had a strong and lasting effect on him.[1] He tried to comprehend them in his way, that is, to understand why they worked upon him: "Where I cannot do that," he says, "for instance, in music, I am almost incapable of enjoying them. A rationalistic or perhaps an analytic trait in me struggles against my being affected and not knowing why I am so and what it is that affects me." The word "almost" in this interesting statement should be well considered.

Twice I had the opportunity to observe that Freud sometimes enjoyed music. (He told me once that Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* did not mean anything to him, but that he liked the *Meistersinger.*) The very wording of that statement about his restricted capability for enjoying music proves that there was an emotional reluctance against this art operating in Freud. He fought against the effects of music because a rationalistic, or perhaps an analytic, trait in him could not tolerate not knowing why he was affected. The most important part of this statement is the admission that he is or was affected by music. One assumes that he turned away from the emotional impressions of music and that the explanation of his attitude, the pointing to a rationalistic or analytic trait, is a secondary one—we would say, itself a kind of rationalization. It is likely that this turning away, this diversion was the result of an act of will in the interest of self-defense and that it was the more energetic and violent, the more the emotional effects of music appeared undesirable to him. He became more and more convinced that he had to keep his reason unclouded and his emotions in abeyance. He developed an increasing reluctance to surrendering to the dark power of music.

Such an avoidance of the emotional effects of melodies can sometimes be seen in people who feel endangered by the intensity of their feelings. I know a man who, at least on the surface, became almost insensitive to music after a phase in which he was too much subjected to its effects. He told me that he began to avoid listening to music because it induced daydreams and awakened fantasies of grandeur and victory, evoking vague but intense longings and desires in him. When the music ended, he always felt disappointed. He began to build a wall of protection against that very unpleasant reaction of disillusionment, to erect barriers of defense against the effects of musical impressions because he hated to be duped by the influence of melodies. In this avoidance of the state of emotional unbalance into which music could bring him, he avoided listening to symphonies and finally became almost insensitive to their power.

[1] "Der Moses des Michelangelo," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. IX.

It seems to me that Freud built up similar defenses and later on hardened himself against the emotional appeal of music. This is not the sole attitude which Freud purposefully developed in his life. There are other intensified reactions of a similar kind.

TWO

In the first years of my psychoanalytic studies, I wrote besides analytic papers and book reviews, a great number of literary and general articles for Viennese newspapers and magazines. Influenced by French and Austrian writers, I perhaps immodestly felt that I had acquired a considerable facility of presentation. In a conversation—it was perhaps in 1913 or 1914—Freud spoke pleasantly of my literary talent but surprised me by asking whether or not I could suppress the stimuli for literary production of this kind. He felt I could perhaps develop as a writer to the rank of A.P. (he mentioned a well-known Viennese novelist), but that the renunciation of cheap literary laurels would greatly benefit my psychoanalytic research work, which he considered more important. I followed his advice and have never regretted it, but did not understand the mental economy and dynamics of his advice until later, when I recognized that he himself had made a similar renunciation. Wilhelm Stekel reports in his autobiography that Freud told him that he had once wanted to use the material his patients provided in the writing of novels of his own. He sacrificed literary ambition of this kind in the service of scientific research, but an echo of it is sometimes noticeable, especially in the case histories he wrote. He says occasionally, "I have been brought up with strict science and I cannot help it if my case histories sometimes sound like novels." Traces of the emotional reaction

against that earlier tendency can still be found later in the form of rejection, as in that exclamation, "Don't put me into literature!" in his discussion of lay analysis.[2]

There are other instances that show Freud, sometimes forcefully and purposely, resisting tendencies in himself which he recognized as opposed to the goals he wished. Such reactions seemed to take the form of an energetic and sometimes even overemphasized turnabout. He himself mentioned several changes of this kind in his writings. He reported, for instance, that he had developed an inclination for the exclusive concentration of his work on one topic or problem, much in contrast with the diffuse nature of his studies in the first years at the university. This "turn" came after 1882, and he remained true to it. He renounced also his original speculative tendencies because he did not wish them to interfere with his objective observations. He relinquished earlier interests in favor of psychoanalytic research, etc.

The psychological expectation in his advice to me was that to sacrifice my facility in writing would benefit my research interest and enrich and enlarge my analytic studies.

Is it unlikely that Freud turned determinedly away from music because he felt too deeply affected by its power at a certain phase of his life? Do not his own words show such an emotional reaction when he says that something in him struggles against his being affected by music? It is furthermore very probable that his reaction was intensified by the impression of the musicomania of the Viennese, which in the years between 1890 and 1910 reached its climax.

The denied and rejected tendencies against whose influence Freud built up such strong defenses did not disappear, but left traces in him, and found different and distant expressions. Some of them, for instance, speculative inclinations and interests in early history worked their way, in his old age, from the depth into which they were banished to the surface.

Freud's confession that he did not often respond to music does not mean that he was insensitive to its message, but that he fought against his own sensitiveness. He had unconsciously forgone being subjected to its lure and language, and this voluntary sacrifice benefited his fine ability to hear the unconscious processes, helped him

[2] *The Problem of Lay Analysis* (New York, 1927).

to develop the sense for the rhythm of subterranean movements of the mind.

In a passage of his writings[3] he discussed the teaching of G. Jung and of his school, and stated that here a new religious-ethical system was created that had to reinterpret, distort or remove the actual results of psychoanalysis. He develops this idea: "In reality one had heard a few cultural overtones of the symphony of the world and had again missed its all-powerful melody of the drives." A man that hath no music in himself could not have thought of this magnificent comparison. Freud had heard that forceful melody of the world symphony and he wrote its score in his analytic books.

THREE

Do we not all sometimes feel as Freud did? A certain reluctance to the compulsion of music that affects us and does not let us guess what affects us and why. We surrender to an adagio from a Beethoven symphony, yet we cannot say what it was that transported us with emotion. Here is a message which everybody understands, but nobody can translate. It is easy enough to explain what a musician playing upon his instrument does, but very difficult to find why the *dolce* of the strings in the adagio sways us, to define its special expressive value or even the precise nature of our emotional response. Yet we hear in the language of music "the secret history of our will," as Schopenhauer said, of our drives, as we would say today. The affinity of music to the other expressions of the unconscious, the kinship of this art with the dreamlike and intangible element, with the night aspect of our emotional life is of a special, not easily definable kind, because music itself cannot be defined except in the superficial terms of a dictionary. Bruno Walter tells of a young New York enthusiast who asked many well-known musicians, "What is music?"[4] The answers he received appeared to Bruno Walter either false or unsatisfactory, but he confessed that he felt incapable of answering the question himself. He admitted that he could not say to this day what music is, in spite of a long search after appropriate definitions. One

[3] "Zur Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. V.

[4] "Von den moralischen Kräften der Musik" (Wien, 1935), p. 8. (This lecture given in the Kulturbund in Vienna was not translated into English.)

is unable to grasp its nature with the clarity of reason and cannot give it an abstract verbal expression. Music, says Bruno Walter, using a beautiful comparison, is like a seraph in the temple of the Lord and covers its eye with two of its wings.

The intimacy of musical experience in which the pulse beat of a composition becomes our own cannot be caught in the paltry net of the words we utter. Bernard Shaw once said, "I could make musical criticism readable even to the deaf." This is believable; it is a question of style. But can Shaw or anyone else convey the meaning music has for the individual? Can he communicate the experience he had when he heard a Mozart sonata?

Language develops more and more in the direction of objective communication, denotes things and acts. It becomes simultaneously impoverished as an expression of emotions. The most appropriate verbal manifestation of emotional life is in the verses of great poets. (The lowest point of describing and portraying human feelings is reached in scientific psychology.)

Human speech denotes the material reality, music is the language of psychic reality. Music does not name objects and events. It can, at very best, conjure them up. There is much controversy about the meaning of words; a discussion of the meaning of music is condemned to fail before it starts. The rigid "tyranny of words" is contrasted with the sweet compulsion John Milton attributed to melody. Words have strings, but songs have wings.

Music is the universal language of human emotion, the expression of the inexpressible. The composers articulate "subtle complexes of feeling that language cannot even name, let alone set forth."[5] This book does not deal with problems of music, but with a problem of psychology, namely, with the question of the significance of musical recollections within the flow of our thoughts. We do not speak here of music as an actual emotional experience. What can be said of it that could come close to its immediacy and intimacy? We speak here rather of musical recollections in the middle of other associations. No attempt is made to describe or transcribe the emotional response. Wherever reactions to musical experiences are mentioned, words are functioning only as guideposts leading to the threshold of the domain where melodies live. In our musical associations the impressions tunes once made upon us are renewed in their effect. They resemble the bush Moses saw, the bush that burned with fire and was not consumed.

[5] Susanne K. Langer "On Significance in Music" in *Philosophy in a New Key* (Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 222.

FOUR

The basic, most important rule of the psychoanalytic investigation of others and ourselves, the procedure of free association, is best expressed in the words of Rudyard Kipling: *"If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim . . ."*

Self-observation can teach each of us that such "aimless" conscious thinking is much rarer than we would assume. We demand a license from our thoughts and are afraid to let them run loose. Not only our patients, but also we analysts hold our thought on short reins. The main psychological premise of the success of free associations is moral courage alongside the conscious decision to follow one's thoughts without distortions and censured misrepresentations. Lies and pretenses to ourselves are more dangerous and harmful to self-confidence than lies and pretenses toward others.

Besides those emotional and intellectual hindrances which psychoanalysis calls resistance, there are others not based on inner objections, but determined by the inadequacy of human communication. The words we think and the words we say, the sentences we have in our minds and those we utter would not be the same even if they were phonetically identical. Our language emerges from a subsoil in which sounds, fleeting images, organic sensations and emotional currents are not yet differentiated. Something gets lost on the way from the brain, which senses, feels and thinks, to the lips which speak words and sentences. The most essential part of that loss and lack is, of course, emotional, or rather the specific and differentiated quality of our emotion; one could say the personal and intimate note or the emotional significance of what we want to express. Language is at its poorest when it wishes to grasp and communicate nuances and shades of feelings—in that very area in which music is most efficient and expressive. Even in the language of poetry not much of the secret life of emotions comes across. Music, so poor in definite and definable objective and rational contents, can convey the infinite variety of primitive and subtle emotions.

In the flow of free associations, snatches of tunes are interspersed at certain significant points. Their perception and analytic evaluation are part of the analytic technique of finding concealed and unconscious processes. To be aware of their emergence, not to exclude them from observation, is imperative "if you can think and not make thoughts your aim." It must have psychological significance that not words, but a musical theme occurs to you. Why is it that your thought process is not expressed in imagining and planning, but in "inward singing," to borrow a term of Eduard Hanslick?[6] It must make a difference whether a sentence from a speech, a line from a poem or a tune emerges in your train of thoughts. If a melody from a Mozart concerto occurs in the midst of clear, aim-directed ideas, the psychoanalytic investigation could perhaps discover not only what is on your mind without your being aware of it, but also what's in your heart. A musical passage flowing through your brain perhaps indicates your mood, expresses some feelings unknown to you, besides thoughts. Its emotional significance cannot be translated in words, but can be communicated to yourself or to the listener who knows the composition. It is certainly meaningful when a sentence, heard or thought, pursues you, and a psychoanalyst could perhaps have discovered the unconscious significance of those words that haunted Mark Twain: "A blue trip slip for a three-cent fare." Yet not only lines, but also melodies that run through your mind, phrases from a Schubert symphony or from a *Divertimento* by Mozart may give the analyst a clue to the secret life of emotions that every one of us lives. In fleeting tunes whose wings have fluttered away into the unknown as in a melody that has a hold on you and will not release you for hours, that life, concealed from yourself has sent messages to the mental surface. In this inward singing, the voice of an unknown self conveys not only passing moods and impulses, but sometimes a disavowed or denied wish, a longing and a drive we do not like to admit to ourselves. The theme that is stirring deep inside you imposes itself on you, interferes with rational thoughts and obscures the swift, straight line of logic. But the recurring tune may announce in its compelling and compulsive pressure the working of an unknown power in you. Whatever secret message it carries, the incidental music accompanying our conscious thinking is never accidental.

[6] *Vom Musikalisch Schönen* (Vienna, 1876), p. 75.

FIVE

Among the physicians who practice psychoanalysis, there are quite a few who are excellent neurologists, of high intelligence, men and women well trained in psychiatry, well meaning, hard-working and entirely out of touch with the unconscious process. Caught in the tangle of theoretical sophistication, filled with terminological labels and thought clichés, their minds move in the psychoanalytic groove without a trace of insight that they are in the wrong profession. What could you tell those who have spent so much energy, time and money on a study for which they have all the external, but none of the inner qualifications? Beethoven said, in a similar situation, to a young man who played to him, "My dear fellow, you will have to practice a long time before you recognize that you have no talent."[7]

Fortunately, the majority of the young people who are trained in psychoanalytic institutes have that native gift that is the most important psychological premise for understanding of unconscious processes. There is nothing wrong, but there is something lacking in their training. Also, the native talent, in various degrees present in them, has to be developed. Psychoanalysis can be taught as far as it is a craft and cannot be taught as far as it is an art. Its method, its means and instruments can be demonstrated to the student in the same manner as a carpenter can show his apprentice how to put boards together to make a table. All other aspects of analysis can be acquired by a gifted student, but they cannot be taught. He has to learn them in studying the examples that the masters show in their work. To teach a student the technique of psychoanalysis is possible only to the same extent it is possible to teach a musician the technique of composition. Arnold Schönberg once said that if there were ateliers of composition, as there are studios of painters in which the students watch the masters at work, the theoreticians of music would be superfluous.[8] "The training that would educate an artist could in the best case consist in helping him to hear himself. . . . He who hears himself acquires that technique." (Also, Freud's comparison of the analytic technique with the "fine art of the game of chess" em-

[7] Reported by Wilhelm Rust in a letter to his sister Henriette (July 7, 1808). Published in *Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte* (1869), p. 68.

[8] *Harmonielehre* (3rd edition, Vienna), p. 2.

phasizes that the endless variety for the moves defies description. The gap in the instructions "can only be filled in by the zealous study of games thought out by master.")[9]

In *Listening With The Third Ear* and *The Secret Self,* I insisted on the necessity of "hearing oneself" in psychoanalytic work, by which I mean the use of one's unconscious as a receiving apparatus. In this book I want to turn attention to the auxiliary sense of perception experienced in the emergence of musical themes, with the purpose of adding to the known methods a neglected means of tapping the wires of unconscious life. The intangible that is invisible as well as untouchable can still be audible. It can announce its presence and effect in tunes, faintly heard inside you.

Sensitivity to the almost imperceptible is present in most psychoanalysts. Not many turn a deaf ear to the emotional undertones. What is neglected in the study program of psychoanalysts is, to use the musical term, *ear training:* the development of a higher sensitivity to musical phenomena of all kinds—for instance, to minute distinctions in tones. Some psychoanalysts are too eager to recognize and to define those undertones, or are unwilling to pursue them in their variations and combinations after they have acknowledged them. The comparison with musical phenomena can here be followed up even to the terms. In the development of a composition, the latent possibilities of a theme are unfolded by means of melodic, harmonic or contrapuntal variations. Development is also called working out which is identical with the Freudian term (*Durcharbeiten*) used for a certain phase of the analytic process. To continue the comparison of the analytic procedure with artistic creation: Schönberg, listening to the composition of one of his pupils, sometimes said, *"Das ist nicht ausgehört,"* meaning that the musical idea was not heard to its end by the composer inside, was not thought and experienced to its last and decisive consequences. It remained in its first phases, in its early form.

It is not enough to introduce a new instrument or to improve an old, forgotten one. You have to demonstrate how it can be used. This is best done by examples. There is an abundance of such examples in the mental lives of the patients we treat as well as in our own, but this material has remained almost unnoticed and unused, its

[9] "Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis," Collected Papers, Vol. II.

psychological significance unrecognized. The other day a patient reported that a trivial tune had occurred to him together with the line:

Did you ever see a lassie
Do this way and that?

He did not know what this banal tune wanted to convey, but when it recurred, he became aware that it was accompanied by memories of a recent sexual experience and of visual images of the responsive movements of the woman during sexual intercourse. Is it without significance that another patient cannot get rid of the second part of a children's ditty in his thoughts?

Ten little, nine little, eight little Indians,
Seven little, six little, five little Indians,
Four little, three little, two little Indians,
One little Indian boy.

A few minutes before the patient had spoken of his brothers and sisters. It was easy to guess that the unconscious desire to remove his siblings and to have the position of an only child had found its expression in that ditty.

Many, and more interesting, examples of musical associations are presented in the first part of this book, and their hidden meaning revealed. Pursuing the line of my book *The Secret Self,* I shall try to report my reactions to the material provided by analysis of others and myself, and to present analytic insight resulting from those observations. The second part of this book leads from short-lived musical associations to that puzzling phenomenon of the haunting melody and its psychological analysis. An inner experience of my own is presented in the third part. The character and surrounding circumstances of this haunting melody reveal it as one of the main melodies of my life. Such melodies which seem to refuse to leave us express the operation of a dominating power within the person in whom they sound and resound. They are not tunes of the hour or of the day. They are, so to speak, the life melody of the individual.

The novelty of this research is to a great extent responsible for the fact that the material used to present the psychological significance

of musical associations is mostly self-observed. The personal pronoun *I* is not meant as personal. I am speaking of the psychoanalyst, listening to others or to an unknown part of himself, when I speak of me. Only a few instances contributed by other analysts or by patients, rare as raisins in a cake, are interspersed in this report. Future investigators, favored by more appropriate material, will fill the wide gaps left in this first attempt.

CHAPTER II

Medley of Melodies

ONE

MUSIC expresses what all men feel much more than what they think. Its language is an esperanto of emotions rather than of ideas. It does not emerge from the flow of conscious thought, but from the stream of preconsciousness. The following are cases where tunes appeared either as still unformulated thought germs or as heralds of thoughts that were still on the preverbal level.

Let me begin this potpourri with the story of an intelligent patient of mine. In her rather stormy married life with a musician, she observed a recurrent trait of her husband's behavior. After an argument or quarrel with her, he often sits at the piano and improvises some music, mostly popular tunes. After a few bars he regularly begins to play a tune the patient knows: "Glad to be unhappy." She remembered a line of that inane lyric: "I'd rather be blue thinking of you." The patient interpreted this habit of beginning his improvisation with this tune as "musical confession," and told me that her husband often provoked marital scenes by nagging about some trifling thing in the apartment and that he seemed to get some masochistic satisfaction from feeling unhappy later on. The other day when he again played that tune a few hours after a sharp argument, he turned to her and said, "I don't know why I always play that trash." She was too clever to enlighten him, but she felt some satisfaction when he immediately began to play the title-song of *I*

Married an Angel. The husband does not have the slightest notion why he plays that song on such occasions, but it is obvious to the patient that he expresses his regrets or remorse in this musical form.

Here are a few of my own experiences that cast light on the determining factors that decide about the preconscious selection of emerging musical ideas and their function as announcing conscious thought. I was present at an amateur performance of Strauss's opera *Salome.* A young lady of my acquaintance sang the part of the princess. I didn't like the way she sang it, but I was, of course, not competent to have an opinion about her artistic qualities. A few days later she asked me about my impressions. Put on the spot, I felt embarrassed because I could not praise either her singing or her acting. At this moment a fleeting impression of the opening bars of the opera occurred to me, and I answered, "I entirely agreed with the first sentence of the score." The first words are sung by a young Syrian soldier on the walls of Jerusalem: "How beautiful is the princess Salome tonight!" In avoiding giving my acquaintance insincere praise, I had said something complimentary that was also true: she had indeed looked beautiful that evening. The first bars of the opera came, so to speak, "handy" to my mind.

In a conversation I was trying to give some American friends an idea of the character of old Vienna and, since the last war was mentioned, of the Austrian Army in co-operation with German divisions in Russia. It was difficult to present the mixture of the resolute, military and disciplined conduct of Viennese soldiers on the parade ground and their avoidance of every real effort during the last war. How can one describe the contrast of showy militarism with the easygoing and deeply unmartial nature of the soldiers of my native city? While I speak of the good-natured and jovial manner of the Viennese, a few bars of a Schubert *Ländler* (slow waltz) are dimly in my memory, to be immediately replaced by the *Deutschmeistermarch,* the forceful military march of the Austrian infantry regiment No. 4, whose soldiers were all Viennese. As if the intertwining of the two tunes had opened a door, an anecdote that well characterized the attitude of the Austrian infantry came to mind. During the war a cannon got stuck in the Galician mud, and ten soldiers of that regiment were ordered to free it and to put it into motion again. The soldiers put their shoulders on the gun, counted, "One, two, three," many times, and shouted "Ho!" and "Go!" but the gun did not

move. A lieutenant in command of a Prussian company chanced to march along. The officer scolded the Viennese for their sloppiness and ordered some Prussian soldiers to put the gun into motion while the Austrians had to stand by. He commanded in sharp and determined tones, "One, two, three!" and the cannon was moving. The Deutschmeister were not impressed and said, "Naturally, if you use force!" The emergence of the march of the regiment together with the easygoing Schubert tune in my mind paved the way for the memory of that well-known anecdote.

Other musical echoes from the war intruded into different trains of thought. A young, beautiful woman confided to me that she now had a lover. A few minutes afterwards, while I was still talking with her, a tune came to mind which I could not identify. I had heard it a long time ago. Only after I heard it in my mind again, I remembered what it was: a song I'd heard our soldiers sing when we returned from exercise marches:

Was nützet mir ein Rosengarten,
Wenn and're drin spazieren gehen?

What use is a rose garden to me,
When others are walking in it?

The regret expressed in such symbolical language was, at the moment when the tune occurred, not consciously felt, but following its emergence in the very next moment.

On another occasion belated regret that I had not enjoyed my youth more came to surprising expression. In this case, also, the emotion was consciously felt only after a melody had heralded it. A memory from the years of my military service was present, and I had no doubt as to the origin of the melody, but its emotional significance became conscious after it was put into the context from which it was taken. In a conversation I had spoken of a relatively free and gay phase in 1916, during which our troops were garrisoned in a city near the field of battle. I was a young officer then and I enjoyed going out on horseback every morning. It felt good to pass from a trot to an easy canter after one had gone beyond the suburbs and had reached the open country. Thinking of those carefree months, I imagined the sounds of the hoofbeats and that rhythmical tone went over into a well-known melody: the hard C Major marching rhythms from the *Song of Beauty* in Mahler's *Song of the Earth.*

These sounds imitate onomatopoetically the noise of tramping horses.

It was not astonishing that these rhythms came to mind. It is a musical portrait of riding, but there are many other expressive motives of this kind: Schubert's *Erlkönig*, Liszt's *Mazeppa* and some ballads by Karl Löwe, the names of which elude me at the moment. (Rereading this page, I remembered another song in which the trotting of horses changes into a waltz melody. It is the *Fiacre Song* by Gustav Pick, a popular tune in the Vienna of my youth.) Why just the C Major tune from Mahler's work? The sounds of the horses galloping from Schubert's lied are there for a moment, but they immediately give way to the C Major march. And then it comes to an abrupt end. The tender Andante that follows appears in my memory together with the image that is called up by the Chinese poem for which the tune was written. Young beautiful girls plucking flowers near a stream in which their figures are reflected; a group of young horsemen storming by. And then the stormy scales of the strings are replaced by that melody of the contralto voice, accompanied by harp and violins:

> And the loveliest of the maidens
> Sends the rider glances of yearning,
> Her haughty bearing is no more than feigned.
> In the sparkle of her wide eyes,
> In the darkening of the eager glance,
> Ascends the plaint of the passion in her heart.

While the flageolets of the harp and the flutes die away, a visual memory comes to mind. On those morning rides I often saw a young, beautiful girl in a meadow and sometimes felt her glance following me when I galloped by, but I was too shy even to speak to her. How young and stupid I was!

The other day an old tune occurred to me in the middle of a conversation. A lady with whom I am on "teasing" terms appeared at a party in a dark dress and a necklace of black pearls with a cross. The lady is Irish Catholic, her husband Jewish, but he wishes her to go to church and bring up their children as Roman Catholics. It was perhaps this thought that made the tune *Silent Night, Holy Night* appear in my memory. The solemn melody was immediately followed by the memory of an anecdote they told in old Vienna. A little Jewish girl once asked, "Mum, have gentiles Christmas trees, too?" The emergence of that Christmas hymn (by the Austrian composer Franz Gruber) preceded and announced the thought expressed in that anecdote.

This example has some psychological interest because the thought implied in the anecdote led to a remark that indulgent listeners might call witty. Glancing at the big crucifix hanging from her necklace, I said teasingly to the lady, "You have to be careful at this party. Some people might think you were Jewish." In contrast to the preconscious thought, heralded by that melody, the thought was for a moment submerged and left to elaboration in the unconscious—the dynamic process that results in the production of wit.

TWO

The following are instances of melodies occurring in the middle of work. I am choosing as a representative example a musical phrase that came to my mind while I was writing a psychoanalytic paper that is connected with my "witty" remark mentioned before. Almost twenty years ago I wrote an analytic article, "The Intimacy Of Jewish Wit," that attempted to study certain characteristics of Jewish humor.[1] I pointed out that its warmth and intimacy are expressions of an unconscious affectionate attitude on the part of Jews toward their fellow people, of a love of mankind, as it were. One of the cases I wanted to mention in this context was an anecdote heard before the outbreak of the First World War. A Jew mistakenly came into territory near the Russian frontier where a soldier stood guard. At his approach the sentry raised his gun and shouted, "Halt or I shoot!" The Jew replied indignantly, "Are you *meschugge* [crazy]? Put your gun away! Don't you see that here is a *Mensch*?" While I smilingly jotted down that anecdote, expressing a sublime and utter lack of belief in the possibility that one human being could really want to kill another, the solemn melody of the final movement of Beethoven's choral symphony occurred to me. *The Ode to Joy* proclaims the same theme as the Jew's words in that anecdote: the conviction that all men should become brothers.

The tunes occurring to the analyst during sessions with patients are preconscious messages of thoughts that are not only meaningful,

[1] Published in a book *Nachdenkliche Heiterkeit* (Wien, 1933). (Not translated into English.)

but also important for the understanding of the emotional situation of the patient. It would be an analytic mistake to brush them aside or to take them on face value, and to dismiss them as chance musical reminiscences. They not only convey contents unknown to the analyst's conscious thinking, but also communicate to him something of the hidden emotions that he has not yet been able to catch while he listens to his patient. The tunes stand in the service of the agents responsible for the communications between the unconscious of two persons. These melodies present themselves clearly or dimly to the mind, but what they have to convey becomes comprehensible only when the analyst listens "with the third ear." There is a considerable psychological difference between those "chance" tunes and quotations from poems or sentences from novels or plays that sometimes emerge in the thoughts of the analyst during a therapeutic session. A quotation from a poem can be fraught with meaning and can allude to something that had remained dark or unknown to the analyst; it can carry an emotional quality of which his conscious thinking had not been aware. The melody that occurs to him while he listens to his patient is perhaps not as meaningful as lines from a poem in the intellectual understanding of the case, but it induces a recognition of its emotional qualities. The poetic line or the sentence from a play is perhaps more "telling". The musical phrase can say more in its sound allusion.

An example may be helpful in comparing the two effects. At the Highland Hospital in Asheville, where I spent some vacation months as consulting psychoanalyst, I had to interview a young man. While talking with him, I had the impression that he was withdrawn from reality, involved in fantasies or daydreams. He was there physically, but his mind was wrapped in thoughts far away, from which my questions could scarcely call him back. He was polite, but certainly not interested in finding out anything about himself. His lack of co-operation did not have the characteristics of negativism, but rather that quality of absent-mindedness which is a form of concentration on something else. While I tried with little success to pierce the glass curtain that isolated him from the external world, a melody sounded in me which I quickly recognized as the first bars of *"Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen"* by Gustav Mahler. The slow melody of tender resignation, akin to the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony, expressed better than the words the emotional character of the song:

I am lost to the world
With which I have wasted so much time before . . .

People will perhaps think that the artist is dead:

I cannot object to that
Because I really died to the world.

He rests in a quiet area and lives only in his thoughts and songs.

The emergence of the Mahler song heralded the diagnosis of schizophrenia that was consciously made a few minutes later on. If the rather pallid, intellectualized verses by Friedrich Rückert, whose poem Mahler used as text for his song, had come to mind without the fine melody, they would have certainly announced the same diagnosis at which I would have arrived, at all events, without verses and music. But the moving melody conveyed something more of the emotional atmosphere in which this patient lived.

Let me describe another instance of this kind. At the same psychiatric hospital I treated a young woman who had intense anxiety attacks with many psychosomatic symptoms. Her anxieties occurred mostly when she was alone in her house, on a farm in Kentucky. The first approach to the analytic understanding of the case was secured by her complaints about her sexual life. Her husband, a salesman, was, it seemed, of weak or capricious sexual potency and could not satisfy her. It was guessed that she had unconscious fantasies that a tramp could enter the house while she was alone and rape her, and that she reacted with extreme anxiety to the unconscious wish in these fantasies. Later on this guess had to be replaced, or rather modified, by the insight that her anxiety attacks were reactions against the temptation to masturbate when she was alone. When she again complained about the sexual inadequacy of her husband, a simple ditty I had heard another patient in the hospital sing on the evening before, resounded in me. The words followed immediately:

Three blind mice,
Three blind mice,
See how they run.
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails
With a carving knife.
Three blind mice . . .

The thought was, of course, the precursor of the recognition that my patient was unconsciously partly responsible for the sexual failure of her husband, that she frustrated him by her attitude and castrated him in her fantasy. (The three mice as representing the male genitals in its three parts, the farmer's wife cutting off the tails.) If the words of the ditty alone had occurred to me, they could, of course, have contained the same unconscious idea. What did the simple tune contribute to it? Nothing to the content but something significant to the characterization of the patient. It was not "just music," but the just kind of music. The young woman, when she did not have her anxiety attacks, behaved very cheerfully and was easygoing, speaking of her husband's sexual inadequacy as if it were a negligible weakness. There was not the slightest conscious notion of her own hostile and castrating tendencies toward him. The contrast between the cheerful tune of that ditty and its pathetic content reflects the other contrast between the gay and gleeful behavior of the patient and her sinister and hostile attitude against her husband, whom unconsciously she would like to have emasculated while she complained about his lack of virility.

The modulation or the cadence of a ditty of such a kind often remains astonishingly long in one's memory, sometimes much longer than its lines. That alone proves that it has a psychological significance beyond the text that is never a literary achievement. Drawing analytical conclusions from the material a patient had presented during the therapeutic session, I expressed the conjecture that she, the patient, might have experienced a scene in childhood in which she had felt very ashamed and was made fun of by other children because she had soiled herself. The patient could not remember anything of this kind and considered such a scene very unlikely. On her way out, waiting for the elevator, a ditty from early childhood occurred to her and she remembered other children singing it to her: "Shame, shame, I know your name."

Psychology asserts that tone images are grasped earlier than word images, and that the memory for the first is more tenacious than for the latter. It is likely that this is one of the factors responsible for the fact that our memory frequently retains a melody after we have forgotten the text of the song. The emotional value might be responsible for the partiality we show for the melody compared with the text. Even where the text is maintained in our memory, we use it to call up the forgotten melody. It is much rarer that we make use

of the melody of a song or of an aria to remember its lines. The libretto of an opera lives in our memory by the grace of the score. With most of us, also, the visual impression of a performance of an opera is less vivid than its melodies.

Here are a few instances from psychoanalytic practice as evidence for the priority of the tune. A patient has a dream: *She is in the bath and is worried because she has forgotten to take off her watch which could be ruined if it gets wet.* There were no helpful thought associations to the dream. In the pause between her report of the dream and the following sentences she spoke, a long-forgotten tune came to my mind. I recognized it later as the opening bars of a song by Karl Löwe I had not heard since childhood. The title is *The Watch*, and the first lines, remembered only after the analytic session, are:

Ich trage wo ich gehe
Stets eine Uhr bei mir.

Where'er I go, I carry
A watch with me always,
And only need look
Whenever I'd know the time of day.

The watch meant in Löwe's song is the heart. Only after I had remembered those lines did other associations help to interpret the dream. The Viennese girls used to say, "With me it is punctual as a watch," referring to the regularity of their monthly period. I remembered a proverb I heard the Serbian peasants quote during World War I: "With a watch and a woman there is always something to repair," alluding to troubles of the genital region.

At her next analytic session, the patient returned to her dream and said she had forgotten to put the diaphragm in when she had taken a bath before going to bed, and she was worried because she might have become pregnant the last time she had sexual intercourse.

As in this case where the mentioning of a watch awakened musical memories followed by associations to the dream interpretation, in another case a melody was suggested by the idea connection—hair, hairdresser. Marion, a young woman, began her analytic session with reproaches because I had kept the patient preceding her a minute overtime and her own time was shortened by my preferring the other girl. What had that blond hussy got that she, Marion, hadn't got? There followed a critical comment on the physical short-

comings and possible intellectual weaknesses of the other patient. An attack on me and my partiality leads easily to suspicions and doubts concerning my capabilities as an analyst. The rest of the analytic session was to a great extent filled with a discussion of Marion's troubles with her lover, who pays attention to other girls when he goes with Marion to a party, often looks at other women when he is with her at dinner in a restaurant and so on. Near the end of her session Marion reported that yesterday she had been very annoyed with Henry, the hairdresser at Caruso's. He had done her hair badly and she compared the attention and care he shows toward other customers with work he does for her. What have those dolls got that she hasn't? There followed an extensive description of the appearance and manner of the blond young woman in the neighboring booth at Caruso's. The pattern is, of course, clear.

What does it mean that, after Marion left, an old tune occurred to me of which I had not thought for several decades? I recognized it as the "Lorelei," the poem by Heinrich Heine, composed by Friedrich Silcher. What has Marion to do with that beautiful minx on the rock on the Rhine? I tried to remember the lines. Oh, of course, the fairy sits on the rock and combs her golden hair with a golden comb and sings a sweet song, bewitching boatmen on the Rhine. The comparison was suggested by the thought association—hair, hairdresser. I did not remember the final stanza of Heine's poem. Only the slow sentimental melody returned to my mind as if it wanted to he heard. Only then the content of those lines were recalled: that at the end the waves engulf boatmen and ship, and that the Lorelei has cast an evil spell over the men who, enchanted, look up at her, sitting on that rock and singing. Not the lines, but the music with its sad finale told me the story and brought the concealed message to me of the meaning of Marion's behavior. Her unconscious hostility against men, concealed behind her passionate pleading for more attention and consideration, and her hidden destructive trends became clearer to me with the help of that old tune.

THREE

This is perhaps the place to report another instance that shows image and tune in competition, where the musical memory proved,

though more fleeting than the picture in my mind, more helpful to analytic understanding. My patient Charles, a lawyer in his late thirties, showed unusually intense resistance during a certain phase of his analytic treatment. He fell into long silences and declared that nothing occurred to him. Pressed to say whatever he thought, he uttered some trifling sentences and relapsed into silence and sighing. During an analytic session that was characterized by that negative pattern, be interrupted his silence for some minutes to mention a thought that had just occurred to him. It was a memory from the war, in which he had served as a commander in the Navy. He recalled the exhaust of the engines of tbe ship and that in some weather they escaped in a certain direction. I guessed then that he must have fought with flatulence and that he thought I would smell the "exhaust." That did not explain the nature of his resistances, but it alluded to it. When I had recognized the concealed meaning and hint in his thought associations, I remembered a picture I had once seen in a book on Felicien Rops, the Belgian painter. The reproduction of the etching showed a nude young woman, crouching in the grass, her beautiful behind raised in the air. In the distance a windmill is merrily revolving. The artist has entitled his picture with a sentence from the Gospel of John: *"Spiritus flat ubi vult"* ("The mind waves where it wishes").

In the pause provided by the continued silence of my patient, I could give myself freely to my thoughts: for a fleeting moment a phrase from the Bacchanale of the Böklin Suite by Max Reger occurred to me. I had heard the piece only once, and that theme now occurring was in the next moment gone with the wind or rather with the wind instruments that had played it in the performance. In the next moment a little story I had heard about it popped into my mind. The princess of a Middle German state attended the first performance of this suite and was very impressed by the polyphony of the orchestra. She had paid special attention to the themes of the fagots in the bacchanale movement and asked the composer later on whether the musicians had produced those strange tone figures with the mouth. With great seriousness Max Reger replied, "I would very much hope so."

The memory of that passage from the Böklin Suite paved the way for the return of the story, but the meaning of the story was already implied in the mental reproduction of the musical phrase. When

the psychological moment came, I could tell my patient not only that his resistance during the session was determined by his effort to control the impulse to expel gas (the association of the "exhaust" of the ship was a hint in this direction), but also what the unconscious expression of this impulse meant. In contrast to his respectful and even sometimes admiring attitude toward me, the impulse to pass wind expressed feelings of unconscious contempt and disdain. His silence was his defense against the temptation, against the wish to let go. He was afraid I would hear the noisy demonstration of these tendencies. I could meet his doubt by pointing out that in our society an indulgence of this kind is considered indecent, and the company reacts to it with indignation and rejection, as if it conceived of it as an expression of contempt for those present.

FOUR

Dr. Ruth Berkeley has reported two cases from her practice which show the emotional significance of melodies during analysis. A woman patient remembered a certain passage from a composition her husband used to play. The tune was connected with the personality of her husband, as a Wagnerian leitmotif characterizes a figure of his operas. She always put the same words to the air: "Poor old Sam, worn and weary." Another patient of Dr. Berkeley's spoke of his mother, who had become insane and was in an asylum, and renewed memories of his childhood. He began to sing a song his mother had sung to him when he was a boy. He had to stop because he broke into sobs. A patient of mine, a homosexual singer, always heard in his mind the descending chords of the first act of Puccini's *La Bohême* whenever he entered a love relationship with a new object. The scene of these chords is in Rodolfo's room, and he and Mimi are searching for her key, which she had lost. The man finds it in the darkness and hides it. Then his aria follows: "Your tiny hand is frozen." My patient sometimes sang those chords and the following aria *"Che Gelida Manina"* when he remembered the first sexually emphasized meeting with a lover. The searching for the key in the darkness is, of course, as meaningful as the unconscious death wish against the prospective lover (indicated by the words "Your tiny hand is frozen"), but the concealed emotional attitude of the patient is better expressed in the harmonic and melodic features of Puccini's music.

The affinities of certain melodies to some unconscious or preconscious emotions, as in those cases mentioned, were observed and well described by Marcel Proust in *Swann's Way*. "The little phrase" from the andante movement of Viuteuil's sonata for the piano and violin[2] had become merged with Swann's ideas in an inextricable whole: the sorrow and charm of *la petite phrase* speak to him and remind him of Odette. The memory of it haunts him, evokes the image of his lost sweetheart and brings about her magic presence. Those floating chords become a kind of national anthem of their passion *("une sort d'air national de leur amour")*. Hearing the fugitive phrase, emerging for a few moments from the waves of sounds, has for him the significance of an actual idea, as musical motives in general represent to him "actual ideas of another world, of another order, ideas veiled in shadows, unknown, impenetrable by the human mind, which none the less were perfectly distinct one from another, unequal amongst themselves in value and significance." That little phrase is a singular instrument in Swann's attempt to call up the past in his *Remembrance of Things Past*.

Such intimate mental and emotional connection between a melody and the memory of a person is by no means a rarity. The phenomenon is near to that of the haunting melody, which will be treated in this book later on. Nothing that passes through the intellect, such as a line of poetry or the memory of a work of art, a fragrance or a smell, can haunt us with the same intensity or cause us to react with the same vigor. I owe Mrs. Maria Wassermann (the widow of Jacob Wassermann) a beautiful instance. It concerns the opening bars of the slow movement of Beethoven's Ninth. Mrs. Wassermann allowed me to use her own description from a letter to me.

"When I was ten years old," she wrote, "my father[3] took me for the first time to one of the famous Philharmonic concerts which were given in Vienna at half-past twelve P.M. on certain Sundays, as you remember without any doubt. On this occasion, unforgettable to all, Gustav Mahler conducted Beethoven's Ninth. Why I reacted so deeply I don't know, but my father brought me home trembling; I had to be put to bed and symphonic music was ruled out for me for at least a year.

[2] French musicians thought that the phrase can be found in Saint-Saëns's Sonata in D Minor for violin and piano.

[3] Her father was the well-known Viennese writer of novels and plays, C. Karlweis (d. Oct. 27, 1901).

"Two and a half years later my father died. I was still in my teens when I read a novel by Hermann Bahr[4] in which at some point a man, whose life had been broken because the woman he loved deserted him, was sitting in a dark empty room in front of a piano, playing with one finger the first bars of the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony over and over again. I remember that this passage hurt me almost physically and I could never forget it. Hermann Bahr belonged to a younger generation than my father, but during the last decade of my father's life no man was nearer to his heart. Bahr was constantly in and out of our house. I had seen my father worry over his friend's rather wild life, get angry over him, glory in his talents, and I could even feel that he was secretly proud of the friendship and admiration of his younger and glamorous friend. Bahr had no way with children. I knew and resented it, but at the same time I was in love with him in my childish fashion, simply because I loved blindly whatever my father loved. I adored my father and have long since known that I never got over his premature death. To me, these opening bars revive the feeling of irreparable loss, the yearning for the father who had only to be somewhere near me to make me feel: 'Nothing can happen to me.' "

Intense emotions like those experienced by Mrs. Wassermann and those described in *Swann's Way* lose, of course, their strength with distance from the original impression. The melodies can, however, linger on for considerable time, and the memory and sometimes even an echo of their previous effect remains. Continuing her report to me, Mrs. Wassermann wrote: "Needless to say, I have heard these bars many times in my life, I always wait for them during the performance of the symphony, they always touch me, not with the same power any more, but with the same quality of sadness."

Musical phrases occurring to us in this manner may not be as significant as other associations, but they are as worthy of special psychological attention as immediate emotional expressions. And, for the psychoanalyst, heard melodies are sweet, but "those unheard" are not only sweeter, but also more meaningful.

[4] Austrian writer and prominent literary critic who wrote many novels and plays, mostly of Viennese milieu.

CHAPTER III

On Wings of Song

ONE

A FEW YEARS AGO a New York analyst, Max Eidelberg, wrote a book with the title *Take Off Your Mask*. It is a vivid description of the daily work in an analyst's consulting room. The person who is supposed to take his mask off is, of course, the patient. The question remains: Which mask? because we all have several as Salome had seven veils. The disguise we can most easily take off is the one we wear for the public. It is more difficult to get rid of the mask that hides us from ourselves. The mask we wear before ourselves covers our real emotions and thoughts, our secret ideas and plans and even our actions.

This chapter tries to describe how a musical idea, occurring in the middle of an analytic session, helped me to obtain a glance at the real face beneath the mask. The melody emerged only at one point during the analysis, but this point was significant because its understanding secured the clue to the problem of why a certain idea had preoccupied the thoughts of a patient for a long time. The idea did not appear strange at all at first: it seemed the logical continuation of preceding thoughts. It wore the mask of logic and reason.

The purpose of this presentation justifies me in describing only a small part of the analytic phase during which the helpful tune emerged in my thoughts and in neglecting all other aspects.

The patient Cecily is a young woman from a southern state of the U.S., and is secretary in an industrial company. At a certain point in her psychoanalysis, she mentioned that she would like to go to India. The idea occurred to her again during the following session and finally took the form of a plan. She emphasized that she would like to take her mother with her on the long trip. In one of the next sessions Cecily reported that Mother wrote that she had serious doubts about the plan. India is very far from Virginia where she lives; she has not been feeling well lately and she is afraid to go so far away from the town where her doctor takes care of her. Cecily felt very annoyed with her mother, whom she said was full of hypochondriacal fear. There was, however, now a doubt in Cecily as to whether she should go to India or give up the plan.

Cecily frequently returned, nevertheless, to the idea of spending a few months in India, and discussed it in the analytic sessions of the following weeks. She pointed out to me that there was a good chance she might find a good job there. The country that had freed itself of the British yoke had a great future, and perhaps young efficient women could easily get well-paid jobs there.

The only consideration, she said, that kept her in New York was the fear that she might get one of her depressions while she was in India. And where would she be then? When I told her she would then be in India, she accused me of making fun of her because I knew very well what she had meant, namely, that she would be far away from me and from the psychotherapeutic help I had given her during her phases of depression. No, she could not leave me yet. Or should she risk it and console herself with the possibility that she could always get an airplane and return to me and New York?

She had been told that living in India would be much less expensive than in America. She could rent an apartment there and perhaps even have maid service for less money than she paid for the colored girl who now came only once a week to clean her apartment. Yes, she could even hire a permanent maid, of a different color, of course. Cecily who has quite a sense of humor imagined that every morning this Indian servant would open the windows which would overlook a grove of palm trees, would bow deeply, her arms crossed over her breast, and put a breakfast tray full of delightful fruits beside her bed.

TWO

It is not my purpose in this sketch to go into an analytic explanation and interpretation of the thoughts and emotions which Cecily expressed during the following analytic sessions, but to let the material presented speak for itself. I trust that it will speak loudly and clearly enough so that the reader will draw his own analytic conclusions. In other words, I am here more interested in the process of the *demasque,* of the manner in which the true meaning of Cecily's plan to go to India was recognized. I can only state that this very process surprised me as it unfolded itself by and by.

After having discussed the financial and social advantages of the voyage to India, Cecily came out with the discovery that the journey might also lead to meeting a worth-while man and to marrying him. At this point it will be necessary to make a few remarks about Cecily's relationship with men. She was now nearly thirty years old and single. She had had many admirers, but she had difficulties in imagining that any one of them could be her husband. It had become clear to me that Cecily's often-expressed wish to marry was contradicted by many unconscious tendencies and criticisms of her suitors. Let me mention only her doubts concerning the religious faith of young marriageable men. She had scruples about marrying a Protestant because she, a Protestant herself, regretted not believing in all Ten Commandments. She would have liked to marry a Jew because according to her lights, Jewish men make good husbands. The difficulty was that Jewish men have mothers. Cecily anticipated my argument that gentile men have mothers, too, by pointing out that Jewish mothers don't like their sons to marry gentile girls. She had no objection in principle to a Catholic husband. A Catholic young man had courted her, and she had considered whether she should not accept his proposal. There was a circumstance speaking in his favor: his mother had died many years before. He was, it seemed, a practicing Catholic, but Cecily pointed out that at least, "Mother Church does not look into the corners to see whether they are properly dusted." The negative decision was taken when she remembered that Catholics are forbidden to use contraceptives. Cecily had no objections to a Mohammedan or even a Buddhist husband, especially since she, rightly or wrongly, assumed that a

mother-in-law has little to say in the Far East. And why could she not meet a maharaja in India who would marry her? Had not Aly Khan fallen in love with Rita Hayworth? American girls, even less glamorous ones, appear very attractive to Indian princes.

It could easily be recognized that a good part of Cecily's considerations about a possible husband were also influenced by thoughts of her mother, if only in the displacement to the substitute of a prospective mother-in-law for whom Cecily had an unhealthy respect. It was unmistakable that her own mother played a great role in Cecily's matrimonial plans. Mother had once written her a letter filled with gossip from the hometown in Virginia, reporting that Jane, one of Cecily's girl friends, was engaged; Mabel had married; Joan had a baby and Mary was going steady with a man from one of the best families, and so on and on. Cecily, to whom the implication of the letter was obvious, became so furious with her mother that she went out and bought two hats and three dresses with all accessories. (A typically feminine reaction to the content of Mother's letter, almost unimaginable for a man.)

The reason is close at hand why Cecily thought she had to go to India to find an appropriate husband, since she lived in New York where she had a choice of many single men. Her answer to this question was that there were, it was true, quite a few of them, but they did not have matrimonial desires and wanted only to go to bed with her. Cecily pointed out to me that among her present admirers were two who didn't even have seduction in mind. She described a young man who wooed her with considerable passion and who, according to her view, was latently homosexual. "The poor boy," said Cecily, "would probably faint if I said yes to his propositioning me."

Whenever a serious suitor appeared, Cecily found faults in him and became doubtful in regard to any possibility of marrying him. I should perhaps add here that Cecily unconsciously avoided the company of men from the South, especially those from Virginia, because she was convinced that a girl who is single at thirty years is looked down upon in her social circles of the South and is almost considered an old lady.

In one of the sessions in which Cecily spoke of her project, that vague and provisional plan to see India suddenly took a new, surprising and definite form. It emerged in the shape of a veritable

obsessional idea, namely: *If I don't go to India, I shall never have a baby.* The question is justified as to whether that plan was not from the beginning an incognito obsessive thought, and whether the last form it took was not the original one that had not dared to show its true face before. Neurotic symptoms of this kind often try to appear at first in a disguised form and gain courage during the analytic treatment. Obsessional thoughts take off their masks at the right moment and freely show their true character, reveal their original text and declare what dominating place and importance they have in the life of the individual. The analyst understands only later that the obsessive thought had been there many years before, but was not recognized as such. With regard to this process of coming to the light of analytic perception, obsessive thoughts resemble the dogmata as the Catholic church presents them. According to this concept, a dogma has no origin and development. It was always there and was contained in the Holy Scripture. It does not come into existence at a certain moment, but is only discovered then and formulated and expressed by the Pope teaching *ex cathedra.*

The dogma that the Holy Virgin ascended to Heaven, which was declared part of the eternal truth by the present Pope, was a part of God's revelation and was only interpreted, declared and elucidated by the Holy Father in Rome. In a similar manner an obsessional thought does not come into existence at a particular time, but is there at the roots of many seemingly casual ideas, as in the case of Cecily's plan for a voyage to India.

Cecily's thought connection between going to the Far East and having a baby appeared at first as the natural and logical development of her plan of spending some months in India and marrying there. It soon became transparent that the obsessive thought had preceded the plan and had led to it rather than being one of its conclusions. Her conviction that she would never have a baby if she did not go to India was independent of her desire to marry. It had the characteristics and the scope of an obsessional idea, not only its inherent qualities, but also in the typical conditional "if" form, rarely missed in thoughts of this kind. The man, the father of that imagined child, no longer played an important role in her thoughts. He was reduced to a mechanical part, was considered only as being instrumental in the process. Yes, sometimes she even thought it would not be necessary to marry. Although she clearly realized that

she did not want an illegitimate child, she often thought of such a possibility in following her obsessive thought. She fleetingly imagined it would be possible to go to India, to become pregnant, then to return to New York for some time, and, after the child had reached a certain age, to go again to the Far East and repeat the performance. Cecily figured out that in this manner she could have four or five children before reaching the menopause.

But why go to the Far East if things are as simple as that? Why the trouble and expense of this long journey? If marriage were not a necessary precondition, there would be enough men on the spot in New York, ready and even eager to oblige. (The other day a patient told me that once during the war he crossed a playground. A small boy, who thought he recognized his father in the man in officer's uniform, ran to him joyfully, shouting, "Daddy!" The patient glanced at the young and pretty mother of the child and said, "Alas, a mistake!")

Cecily's obsessional thought emerged in its clear and final form without any preparations and preceding considerations. She did not know why she was now convinced that the journey to India was a necessary premise for having a baby.

THREE

The solution of the problem of why Cecily was convinced that she had to go to India in order to become a mother, was reached on a surprising detour. While I listened to this patient who was possessed by that mysterious idea, the tune of Mendelssohn's *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* came clearly to my mind. I had been quite helpless a minute before, when I first heard the idea without an inkling of a notion what Cecily's obsession meant. I was very surprised when the quietly floating and tender melody of Mendelssohn's lied emerged, but I had learned to pay attention to such intercurrent thoughts during analytic sessions. My astonishment lasted only a second, and then the clear recognition of the origin of Cecily's obsessive thought emerged. I could tell her my guess about its genesis and meaning: namely, that she must have thought as a little girl that babies came from India and that this childhood idea was capsuled in her obsessive thought as an insect is in amber. Here it

appeared in the form of a conditional sentence: *If I don't go to India, I shall never have a baby.*

During that session the patient could not remember anything of this kind, but she reported a few days later that as a little girl she had been told that babies come from a faraway country, and that her grandmother had prepared her for the arrival of her little brother by telling her that the stork would bring him from India. Unaffected and untouched by later knowledge and dissociated from it, the fantasy of the child had been preserved in her memory and had emerged so late and in the distorted form of an obsessive thought. At its roots the idea from her childhood was concealed and had grown into the plan to go to India. The journey to this distant country fulfilled the requirement for having a child and the obsessive thought (*If I don't go to India, I shall never have a baby*) is, in the terms of that old belief, quite logical. It also makes good sense that Cecily wished her mother to accompany her and that she felt hurt when Mother refused—it was, comparatively, as if a daughter asked her mother to be at the hospital during delivery and if the mother demurred at having to be present. It was satisfying that my hypothesis about the meaning of Cecily's obsessive thought was indirectly confirmed by the memories that had occurred to her. It was, however, more significant that the obsessional idea very soon receded and lost its emotional power over my patient.

But, in the meantime, my curiosity turned to a new problem, this time one of introspective psychology. I was trying to find out how and why that Mendelssohn song came into my thoughts. No doubt it introduced or even facilitated the arrival of my guess about Cecily's obsessive idea. But what has *On Wings of Song* to do with that infantile theory of where babies come from? In an attempt at tracing back the emergence of the song, I remembered what Cecily had said before the tune occurred to me. She had spoken of the necessity of going to India and that she would, of course, travel by airplane. . . . The wings of an airship and the wings of song? . . . But, that is ludicrous! . . . The first bars of the lied occurred to me again this time, together with Heine's verses:

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges,
Herzliebchen, trag ich dich fort,

Fort, nach den Fluren des Ganges,
Dort weiss ich den schönsten Ort.

On song's bright pinions ranges,
My airy flight with thee
Hence! to the banks of the Ganges,
My loved one, oh, come with me.

There, amongst the lotus flowers and violets the couple will lie down,

While in the distance rushing
The sacred stream is heard.

FOUR

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges had been familiar to me since early childhood. My mother sang that lied many times, and although I did not then understand all the text I realized that it was a love song, full of tenderness and longing. I knew that India was a far-away country, and an aunt of mine had once told me that the stork brought babies from there. He bad picked up my little sister from a river with his long red bill and had carried her into our home in Vienna. Later on I must have heard that the Ganges was a powerful river larger than the Danube, and I must have imagined that it was there that babies swam around until they were brought to their mothers.

The process by which the analytic understanding of Cecily's idea was reached can be sketched in the following manner. While I listened to her, there must have been an unconscious preknowledge that some infantile notion connected with babies and India was at the roots of her thought. Her speaking of a plane trip to that country brought the word and perhaps the image: airplane . . . wings, to my mind. The tune *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges* that occurred to me is determined by the thought link of *Flügeln* (wings). The bridge is built along the word presentations of airplane wings and of the wings of the stork. Instead of the conscious thought that I believed as a child the stork brought babies from India—the patient must

also have thought babies were brought from there—the memory of Mendelssohn's song appeared. A second later the recognition of Cecily's idea was clearly in my mind. With the tune and its text the unconscious guess stepped over the threshold of conscious perception.

Here is a case of understanding between the unconscious of two persons comparable to a silent communication. The name of India as Cecily's destination in connection with her daydream of having babies unconsciously revived my old concept of where children come from. Together with it memories of Mendelssohn's song, heard as a little boy, were awakened. The wings of song and those of the stork must have been somehow interconnected in the thoughts of the little boy. The mentioning of the plane trip set the train of thoughts and sounds into motion, and it moved on wings of song back to the forgotten land of childhood.

When the plan of a journey to India first appeared in Cecily's analysis, it was in no way different from other ideas of traveling. I began to suspect that there were some unconscious motives operating behind the stage when the journey became the object of a conflict with Mother. The search for a potential mate in that distant country was, of course, conspicuous, but, when this premise was granted, the hope of having a baby in India could appear as a logical and natural consequence. The form and the emotional intensity of Cecily's conviction that she would never have a baby if she would not go to India revealed its character as obsessive.

Cecily had precise and extensive information about that country in the Far East. But the India of which she daydreamed is as little geographically localized as that of my own childish fantasy. It was never part of the British Empire. It is a wonderland like Alice's, and is part of the invisible world of fairy tales. You cannot reach it by airplane, but a few bars of a melody, moving by its mixture of longing and dream, can carry you there on wings of song.

CHAPTER IV

Bagatelles

ONE

THIS CHAPTER will give the reader an idea of the variety of occasions that bring musical associations to the surface. In the first case described, their point of departure was the hearing of some music by Schubert that led to the memory of other melodies by the same composer. In the second example, a small everyday incident awakened the echo of a Beethoven melody, made me wander to thoughts about this composer and to analytic considerations until the same tune recurred.

Around 1910, an Austrian officer, Rudolf Hans Bartsch, wrote a series of novels whose gentle romanticism attracted many people, but which are now forgotten. All are filled with the atmosphere of Austrian music, and one of them entitled *Schwammerl* deals with a romantic episode in the life of Schubert, whose nickname in the circle of his Viennese friends was Schwammerl. That word means "little mushroom" and was a teasing allusion to the composer's figure. (Another of Schubert's nicknames was "Kannerwas," which means "Is he good at anything?" in Viennese. This was Schubert's first question whenever a newcomer was expected in the circle of his friends. Gustav Mahler's usual inquiry on similar occasions was, "Is he a serious person?" Vienna was in Schubert's time, as it is now, full of pretentious playboys.)

Bartsch's novel presents the story of young Schubert's love for

Hannerl, one of the three beautiful daughters of the Court Glazier Christian Tschöll, and of Schubert's final resignation when he recognized that the girl had turned her affection to one of his friends, the Baron Schober. This friend wooed Hannerl with the new love song of Schubert's: *"Ich schnitt es gern in alle Rinden ein . . ."*

Bartsch's novel *Schwammerl* was published in 1912 and became a success with the German and Austrian middle class. A few years later the novel provided the plot for a much more successful operetta *Das Dreimäderlhaus.* (Perhaps to be translated as "The Three Maiden House." The name by which it is known in America and England is *Blossom Time.)* An insignificant composer, Heinrich Berté, used Schubert's music throughout and arranged the overflow of melodies from symphonies, songs, marches and *Ländlers* in such a clever way that they became popular "hits." The Viennese music reviewers were very critical and made fun of the arranger Berté, whom they referred to as Schuberté, but to many theater-goers in Vienna, Berlin and New York, the wonderful melodies of the master were unknown and *Das Dreimäderlhaus* was the first opportunity to enjoy them. Little did we foresee then, in 1916, that Berté's arrangement would introduce a series of cheap popularizations of Beethoven's, Mozart's and Grieg's work in the form of operettas and movies on Broadway.

Some time ago a long-playing record of *Das Dreimäderlhaus* was published. Listening to those familiar tunes again after almost forty years was like running into a girl with whom one had once been violently infatuated. Susceptible to the charm of Schubert's music even in the spurious form, I caught myself humming the many arias, for instance, the *Lilac Song ("Unter einem Fliederbaum")* and especially *Ungeduld ("Ich schnitt es gern in alle Rinden ein")* with its freely floating and jubilant climax *"Dein ist mein Herz"* ("Yours is my heart").

After a few days, however, the magnificent obsession with those tunes receded and gave way to the emergence of a few bars from different songs on several occasions in the following weeks. Although I had not thought of these lieder for years, they now appeared surprisingly in the middle of a conversation or following a train of thought which had not the slightest perceptible connection with the text of the song. Most of those lieder I had not heard since my early twenties, more than forty years before. Yet the words and tunes came back spontaneously and were as faithfully recorded as if I heard them yesterday. None of them was contained in the score of the *Dreimäderlhaus.* It must have been that the hearing of this operetta had opened a hidden door to the garden of lieder, heard long, long ago, of songs from the cycles *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Die Winterreise.* That record of the operetta had introduced a series of unconscious memories. I must have been unconsciously preoccupied with thoughts about Schubert's life and work in those days, because the image of the house in the Nussdorferstrasse in which he was born—we once lived in the same block—appeared in my mind. So did the picture of him seen in a biography, a report of Beethoven's funeral, at which he was one of the torchbearers, and the memory of a forgotten birthday serenade, written by Grillparzer and composed by Schubert. If the impression at hearing the *Dreimäderlhaus* once more was comparable to that of meeting a girl with whom one had once been infatuated, the inner singing of those songs resembled memories of earlier attachments, recollections of puppy love. Schubert's symphonies mean much more to me, but some of those lieder had made a great impression upon me at an age when I was not yet familiar with his symphonic works.

In the process of becoming aware of musical associations, one has to differentiate between the recognition of them in our perception and the acknowledgment of the emotional meaning they have for us. It is obvious that these two processes need not coincide. It is possible that I recognize this or that melody that emerged in my thought, that I know its title and composer or remember where I had heard it the first time without feeling any emotion. On the other hand, a melody crossing my mind can appeal to me emotionally, but I cannot recall its title or who composed it. There are many cases in which the perceptual and the emotional recognition are almost simultaneous or where the perceptual precedes the other only by some seconds. When those bars from Schubert's songs came to mind, I knew almost immediately what they were and what their emergence meant in the emotional situation.

TWO

Three examples of musical associations emerging only a week after having heard the *Dreimäderlhaus* seem to indicate that I must

have been preoccupied with Schubert in my unconscious thoughts. I jotted these instances down and dated them, planning to use them for my research in the field of musical associations.

The first instance seems to be the continuation of an idea I had followed into the domain of music, its melodious expression, so to speak, or illustration. For some years I had been occupied with the plan of writing a book on the emotional differences of the sexes. The idea was not only to present those differences, but to trace them back to their biological and psychological origins. One of the biological roots of the characterological differences is the contrast of the preponderating passivity of the female with the predominant activity of the male. The continuation of this divergence led to the difference of the single cells, of the resting egg and the highly mobile seed, models in miniature for the adults. One of the sidelines of my exploration followed these biological differences to the predominant attitudes of women and men. When I once again reflected on those basic differences, I caught myself humming the first bars of the Schubert song:

Du bist die Ruh',
Der Friede mild,
Die Sehnsucht du
Und was sie stillt.

You are sweet peace and rest,
You are the haven blest,
You are that bliss of yearning
And all that cools its burning.

In these words, the idea of femininity is indeed contained as far as words can convey it. Schubert's song carries Rückert's artful and artificial stanza into the higher and purer sphere of wonderful sounds, surpassing the poetic articulation. While I still heard those bars with the inner ear and recognized their concealed general message, I thought of the girl who sang it when I was nineteen years old and who later became my wife.[1]

The second example was separated from the first by the interval

[1] Compare my autobiographical book *Fragment of A Great Confession* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1950).

of a few days and had quite a different character. The musical association occurred to me in the middle of an analytic session, and was undoubtedly stimulated by it. My patient had spoken of the toilet habits which she and her younger brother had been taught. The children were accustomed to let the water in the toilet run whenever they had to urinate to drown out the noise made by the discharge. They were also told to avoid speaking of urinating and to use the expression "washing one's hands," whenever they referred to that vital function. The patient who spoke of the extreme modesty which they had been taught also remembered some funny accidents springing from that phase of their education. There was once a house guest, Mr. Brown, spending the night in the room that was separated from her little brother's bedroom by a common toilet. Before leaving for school the next morning, the boy scribbled a note to his mother: "Mr. Brown is no gentleman. He does not run the water when he washes his hands." The patient was amused by that memory, and so was I, of course. There were suddenly moderate march rhythms in my mind, and I recognized them as the first bars of *Whither,* the song from the cycle *Die Schöne Müllerin.* In the next moment I was also thinking of the lines:

Ich hört ein Bächlein rauschen . . .
I heard a brooklet splashing . . .

The amusing story of the little boy stimulated that tune as comment. Say it with music. The melody expressed the bubbling and babbling of the little brook so much better than the words. (By the way, have the biographers already remarked how often Schubert's lieder deal with streaming water?)

The third instance presents a reverberation or re-echoing of a melancholy train of thought stimulated by a conversation with a young colleague. This psychoanalyst had asked how I feel at the age of sixty-five. I had answered, "Still alive and kicking," and had added, "preferably those naïve physicians who believe that a certificate from the American Board of Neurology and Psychiatry bestows psychological gifts on its holders." The remark shows that I had been in a good mood. There was a sudden turn after he had left. His last question concerned plans for my future, and I had answered that I was looking forward to a time when I need not

practice psychoanalysis any more and could give my time to research and writing. Almost immediately after he had left, I felt a wave of gloom and the tune of Schubert's *Wegweiser* popped into my head.

Einen Weiser seh ich stehen
Unverrückt vor meinem Blick,
Eine Strasse muss ich gehen
Von der keiner kommt zurück.

Yet I see a guidepost standing
Pointing sternly to one bourn,
To one way my steps commanding
Whence no trav'ler may return.

The melancholy melody accompanying Schubert's vision did not leave me for some hours and cast a shadow on the day. The intimate expression of gloom had communicated itself to me, but more than the awareness of the approaching end was that of how little one had accomplished at an age more than double that of the composer. The greatest song writer was only thirty-two years old when he died. Thirty-two and what an abundance of masterworks, symphonies, masses, piano compositions he left besides those six hundred and three songs! In the notes of his friend Grillparzer, the draft of an epitaph contains the sentence: "He made poetry sing and music speak." Schubert took some stanzas by a mediocre poet called Wilhelm Müller or some strophic lines by Friedrich Rückert and made them immortal by inspiring life into them. He laid the heart of those stanzas bare and made us hear its beat in his song.

THREE

When I reached for my trousers the other morning a quarter fell out of a pocket, rolled away, and refused to be found. Breathless from the vain search and from crawling under furniture, I rested on the bed for a few minutes and felt extremely annoyed, I don't know whether at myself or at the coin.

If one of my more serious-minded colleagues could have seen me in that undignified position crawling under the bed! . . . At the

thought, the humor of the situation struggled with an inner sense of defiance. Then the memory of a one-act play by Georges Courteline emerged. . . . Oh yes, the position! . . . Was the title not *Article 330?* . . . I remember that the scene takes place in a courtroom and a man is indicted on account of improper conduct. . . . He is a querulous fellow who calls himself a "defensive philosopher" because he spends his time in protecting himself against the wrongs and injustices the law and the police inflict on him. . . . The man rented a peaceful apartment on the second floor with no vis-à-vis, and then came the world exposition in Paris and a revolving sidewalk was built in front of his windows. Thousands of visitors were transported by this escalator every minute, and the poor man had no privacy any more. Naughty boys threw fruit pits and other things into his apartment, and thousands of eyes looked into his windows when the *trottoir roulant* with the visitors to the exposition passed by. The tenant lodged his complaint first with the city, then with the manager of the exposition and other offices. He always got the same answer—it sounds like a refrain, he tells the judge—"We don't know you. We had no business with you. If you want to complain, you have to turn to . . ." and thus he gets the run-around. Only his landlord says, "I know you very well. You always make a nuisance of yourself, you are querulous and always complaining. . . ." One day the man is seen half-dressed, showing his nude behind to the passengers of the escalators, men, women and children. He has to appear at court on account of his behavior. He is too humble to contradict a few thousand witnesses who testified that they had seen his nude back, but he emphatically denies that he had demonstrated it. He explains that a sou had rolled under his bed and he had tried to fetch the coin with the help of an umbrella when the crowd peeped into his windows. He was just busy searching for that spiteful coin. The judge acknowledges the defendant's right of privacy, but has to fine him. (The temptation of going into a discourse on symptomatic manifestations of anal-sadistic and exhibitional trends becomes at this point almost irresistible.)

While I returned in thoughts to that defiant quarter, a forceful melody popped into my mind. Only later on I recognized it as the main motif of a piano piece by Beethoven and remembered its title *Fury over a Lost Penny.*

FOUR

There are many humorous movements in Beethoven's compositions, hut this turbulent piece is one of the few in which rage turns into a tough humor. It emerges from violent impatience and expresses itself in the numerous variations of the initial theme, making fun of the composer's unreasonableness.

When that theme was again heard with the inner ear, I experienced with the temperamental composer the helpless fury of a man who searches vainly under furniture for a coin that is in hiding. Beethoven did not often control his temper. As a matter of fact, one cannot even say he lost control, because he had almost none. He was not master of his passions—except in his music. In his life he expressed freely his impatience, his rage, his hurt pride. He often let himself go, even as you and I, was given to sudden flare-ups and outbreaks, even as you and I. But, unlike you and me, he was ahle to transform his passions into a creation of rare beauty and wonderful expressiveness. We other, average people have as deep feelings, experience joy and sadness as he did and can sometimes express them, but he expressed them in a form that survived his life and will survive ours. The utterances of our emotions well up and vanish with us. His are preserved as high-water marks of human expression. Not only those deep-rooted overwhelming emotions of utter desolation, not only those of glory or power, but also those fleeting everyday feelings of fury, of defiance and impatience. In that bagatelle of a piano piece not only the passing rage is preserved, but also the emotional uproar of a few moments has been turned into humorous self-persiflage.

To call Beethoven temperamental is an understatement. He was very often rude and ruthless with servants and waiters, landlords and publishers, friends and benefactors. He often spoiled his own chances by his flare-ups and extreme irritability. . . . Did he not get up suddenly from the piano on which he had played for a party of Austrian noblemen who had talked during his playing and say, "For such swine I don't play"? . . . I imagined the composer—George Grove once called him "a rough husk"—a short and ugly man, his face covered with pockmarks, with a short thick nose and a large mouth and prominent cheekbones, the uncombed hairs flying round his head. Only the forehead is wonderful, broad and

protuberant, of promethean defiance. I imagine Beethoven tramping through the meadows and woods around Grinzing, Heiligenstadt, Mödling and Baden—how often did I walk around there!—I really seem to see him, lonely, unconcerned, aggressive, filled with tunes, and the "unhappiest of God's creatures," as he called himself. This greatest genius of music was not at all as people imagine him today: he was rude and often vulgar, suspicious and distrustful, and he cursed and swore using very juicy Viennese language. I seem to hear some of it even in the theme of that Rondo.

That titan composer was one of the clumsiest human beings. That master of rhythm could never learn to dance, and his friend Ferdinand Ries refers to that failure as expression of his "general awkwardness and lack of grace in everything he did."[2] How he ever learned to shave himself was hard to understand, even if one takes no account of the frequent cuts on his cheeks. Ries recounts that Beethoven rarely took anything in his hands without letting it fall or breaking it. No piece of furniture was safe in his presence. He often dropped the ink bottle into the piano. He washed his hands in such a way that the whole floor was awash with water that leaked through the ceiling into the apartment below. His doctor called him a "confused guy."

The dynamic urge bursting out into forceful expressions in his music also dominated the everyday life of the sensitive and irritable, increasingly impatient man. Seyfried recalled a concert in Vienna given by Beethoven in 1808.[3] At the beginning of the first *tutti*, the composer, forgetting that he himself was the soloist, jumped up and began to conduct in his stormy style. At the first *sforzando* he flung out his arms so violently as to extinguish both the lights on the piano desk. Seyfried, who feared that the mishap might recur, ordered two choirboys to hold the candles. But when the fatal *sforzando* arrived, one of them received such a clap in the face from Beethoven's right hand that he dropped his light in terror. The audience laughed, of course, and this threw Beethoven into such a rage that when he returned to the piano, he broke half a dozen strings at the first chords of the solo.

[2] F. G. Wegeler and F. Ries, *Biographische Notizen über L. van Beethoven* (Coblenz, 1838).

[3] Ignaz Xaver von Seyfried in his appendix to *Studies on Beethoven* (Vienna, March, 1832).

The rage in that little piano piece concerns a penny that had rolled away and could not be found. But the emotional uproar is turned into humor. Sound and fury are here transformed into melody.

FIVE

The memory of the lost penny came back a few days later when, browsing in a German second-hand bookdealer's store, I discovered a shabby volume entitled *Auch Einer* ("Also Someone"). Before I opened it, I remembered the author's name—Theodor Friedrich Vischer. I had read that humorous novel when I was a student. Theodor Vischer (1807-1887) was professor of philosophy in Tübingen and Zürich and published valuahle books on aesthetics. Besides those scientific contributions, he wrote a cruel satire against the commentators on Goethe's mystical and symbolical concepts in *Faust—The Tragedy's Third Part*—and the philosophical novel *Auch Einer* (1878). Readers of that work will scarcely remember its plot—if there is one—but rather the leading figure, an odd, whimsical man who broods over and fights against the incongruities of the human situation. A sentence and an expression from that novel made their entrance into the vocabulary of educated Germans and is still frequently quoted today.

The philosophical hero is impatient with ethical reflections which he brushes aside with the sentence, *"Das Moralische versteht sich von selbst"* ("The moral is self-evident"). There is, furthermore, an expression that the eccentric man likes and repeats, namely *"Die Tücke des Objektes"* ("Maliciousness of the object"). That philosophical and highly temperamental hero is permanently vexed and tortured by the malicious tricks which inanimate objects of his household and of his wardrobe play on him. For instance, a button or a cuff link rolls under a piece of furniture and plays hide-and-seek with the man who is in a hurry. "That beast" drives the man to despair. So does his drinking glass which spills over the dress of a lady at his side at a formal dinner, his watch chain, his spectacles. He complains about a red and green glasses case that deliberately hides on a red and green piece of furniture and accuses otber objects of crawling to the edge of a table and leaping over. He gets into a

bitter fight with the collar button which resists being buttoned, with keys that try to outwit him when he searches for them. He rages, abuses and attacks those scoundrels whose helpless victim he becomes, especially when he is in a great hurry, and he is exasperated by their devilish malicious joy and indescribable wickedness, by the *"Tücke des Objektes."* In his exasperation he often destroys the spiteful object, smashing it to the ground and stamping on it. He "executes" it, as he calls it.

I heard that phrase first in a lecture by Freud, who quoted Theodor Vischer's novel. As a matter of fact, it was the first lecture I heard Freud give, and I still remember vividly the medium-sized room of the Psychiatric Clinic in the Lazarettgasse in Vienna and the audience of physicians, psychologists and guests who attended those lectures which formed a part of Freud's regular academic obligations. He once told me that he did not like to lecture, and as a matter of fact he improvised rather than lectured. In that lecture Freud gave several instances of the maliciousness of objects and compared their trickery with the mischief concocted by Puck in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and hy the goblins of fairy tales. He quoted Theodor Vischer several times, and analyzed several cases of that "maliciousness of the object."[4] I remember at least one significant instance which illustrated what he meant. He spoke of a bicyclist who has been enjoying a good ride and who, just at the moment when he is thinking of it with pride, runs into a vicious milestone on the highway. Freud then continued his lecture, pointing to the animistic belief of primitive trihes who attribute friendly or hostile feelings to inanimate objects, and compared the attitude of these natives with the behavior of small children who turn and kick a piece of furniture over which they have fallen. In the later years of childhood, also, annoyance and anger against malicious objects are vividly felt. A mother told me the other day that her little girl complained that her shoes had "hopped" from one place to another in the night and played hide-and-seek with her. The attitude of the child can well be compared to that of the composer who was furious at the penny that refused to be found. In all these instances we make the maliciousness of the object responsible for mistakes and slips we unconsciously produce ourselves.

[4] Also in his "Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. IV.

Freud differentiated between a direct and a symbolic determination of those little actions that annoy us so much. During the last week, I had occasion to analyze two instances of symptomatic mistakes in which mechanical devices were treated as if they were carriers of a symbolic meaning.

SIX

The first example reminded me of Seyfried's report of Beethoven's emotional behavior when he played his piano concerto. The composer was certainly very self-confident. He never doubted his wonderful gifts and he did not put his light under a bushel. There were, nevertheless, unconscious self-sabotaging and self-damaging tendencies operating in him that made him twice put out the lights during the performance of his piano concerto.

The incident a patient told me during an analytic session shows, in contrast to Beethoven's attitude, an unconscious insistence on being in the limelight. In both instances the mistake in action had the character of a symbolic or magical operation. The patient and his wife had been invited to a party where a young art critic was also expected. My patient, who is proud of his knowledge and understanding of modern art, looked forward to a stimulating conversation with the scholar. He hoped especially to tell him about a visit he had paid to Picasso and about new French art he had seen on a trip to Europe a few months before. The patient expected to be in the center of the party, especially since he knew that he was very eloquent and understood how to put his knowledge and insights in the best light. To his disappointment, the conversation at the party turned to subjects of less interest to the patient, and when at last people talked about modern art, the other guest spoke brilliantly and without giving the patient an opportunity of presenting his views.

The disappointed man was upset and remained silent when he drove home. His wife went into the house while he put the car in the garage. When he came to the garage next morning, he realized that he had failed to turn off the lights of the car. They had burned through the whole night, and the batteries no longer functioned. He was full of vexation about the trick the electric current had played

on him and felt for a moment the temptation to smash the lights. When he told me of his mistake and of his vivid annoyance after his discovery, I became aware of some slight satisfaction he had felt when he thought of it, although he now made his own negligence responsible for his omission. He finally said with a sly smile, "Well, I had my will after all. I shone." He recognized himself that his frustrated wish to shine had, in spite of everything, asserted itself in that unconscious symptomatic act. The expression of this intense tendency had been displaced to the lights of his car, and a part of the pent-up energy was discharged in the substitute outlet. It is easy to guess that the antagonist against whom the original suppressed anger was directed was the young art scholar who had frustrated the patient's wish.

The other instance also concerns a technical device and is chosen from self-observation. At a certain point in writing this book, I felt sad because I was acutely aware of how rapidly I am aging. To shake off some melancholy thoughts, I got up from my desk and went over to the window to open it. I overlooked the wire of the electric clock on my desk, stumbled over it and tore it. The clock stopped immediately, to my intense annoyance. I felt vexed not only because now I would not know the time, but also on account of the expense necessitated by the repair of the clock. It was significant that I was not annoyed by my own clumsiness, but rather provoked by the clock. When I looked at it again, its face seemed to smile ironically at me. Only a minute later it occurred to me that my clumsy action was unconsciously motivated and had, so to speak, a magical character. I did not succeed, it is true, in turning the clock back, but I managed to make the clock and with it the time stand still. The meaning of my unconscious symptomatic action was really to stop time in its race to the inevitable end.

We live in a world of technical devices, of machines and contrivances, of instruments and gadgets whose invention bears testimony to the ingenuity of man's mind. But, basically, human nature has not changed. We are still impatient with and provoked by the maliciousness of the object on which we project our own unconscious malice. We are all still reluctant to yield to the necessity of becoming old and of dying. And, if we were sincere with ourselves, we would freely acknowledge that we are all still more eager to shine than to be enlightened.

SEVEN

True to the character of the Rondo, the first motif now re-emerges, this time *determinato* and *crescendo*. The composer who gave vent to his fury at the penny that was lost must have thought that the malicious coin played tricks on him. But it is very likely that he unconsciously attributed still another meaning to the loss of and the vain search after the penny. When inanimate objects seemed to become defiant and disobedient, stood in his way or disappeared, when the surrounding world became resistant and recalcitrant, was it not as if his destiny mirrored itself in those infinitesimal vexations and tribulations? The troubles and nuisances, the bothers and unpleasantnesses of everyday life unconsciously appeared to him as representative of those more vital failures and frustrations with which his existence was so rich. Pennies that were lost and buttons that could not be found were, so to speak, tiny slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. But, unlike that brooding Prince of Denmark, Beethoven was very determined to take arms against a sea of troubles of which those everyday adversities were mere drops. The initial motif of the Rondo, returning in my thoughts, now sounds as if it was a musical translation of that challenging sentence he once wrote to his friend Wegeler: "I shall seize destiny by the throat. It will never drag me down."

CHAPTER V

National Anthem by Haydn

ONE

THE CREATIVE PROCESS in the artist and the response in his public are, in general, not well understood by scientific psychology, but the helplessness of psychological investigators of the emotional side of music is almost pathetic. We read, for instance, again and again in the new psychological literature that the reaction of the listener is a reversed re-creation, meaning that his response repeats the creative act in reverse. As far as this statement presents a pattern in the most general and superficial sense, it is a psychological platitude. If, as its presentation and wording often indicate, it is meant that the inner experience of the listener is a copy or replica of that of the composer in reverse, it is sheer nonsense. To mention only one psychological fact, it is impossible that the response of the listener is even remotely akin to the act of creation in emotional intensity and concentration. How should we listeners experience the same deep stirrings as the composer, the same inner tensions, torments and joys from which his work sprang, the misery and the bliss of creation, his despair and transport, the power and glory of conquest? What we experience cannot be anything but a very weak and deluded echo of the voices that he heard in himself.

If the composer has not felt ten times more in the act of creation, if he has not experienced ten times more profoundly than I, I

would not feel anything. In other words, the emotional investment of the composer must have been incomparably greater than my response. If I am touched by the Adagio of the Fifth Symphony, Beethoven must have been stirred to his depth when he composed it (or before he composed it). If I cannot tell and describe the effect of the movement upon me, Beethoven must have experienced something that is unsayable. If he could have expressed it in words, he would not have composed the music.

We experience only a faint echo of those emotions in which the creation of the artist originated and an unconscious inkling of the tensions out of which it grew, and we are unable to describe even those elusive reactions of ours. Nobody has succeeded so far in giving an adequate presentation of the emotional effects of great music. Not even the poets and, of course, much less the psychologists whose attempts are in the majority of cases pitiable.

The last scientific book I read on the subject employed the methods of the laboratory and the tools of statistical procedure in studying those effects. The book is a symposium, composed of contributions by different scientists and conducted by the American Psychological Association in 1921.[1] The volume means to be a response to the inquiry "What is music doing to me?" The contributions deal with types of listeners, sources of musical enjoyment, mood effects and the organic effect of music, effects of repetition and familiarity and finally with the visual, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory effects of music upon the listeners. Tables and charts show the effect of certain qualities on several hearers, data sheets determine the relation of average degree of enjoyment to familiarity and so on.

Nobody will deny the informative merits of those statistical data, but nobody will assert that they can give an adequate idea of the emotional experience of the listener to music. The various investigations made by K. B. Watson, Hevner, Gundlach, Campbell, Hampton, G. Rigg and others have arrived essentially at the same list of moods and emotions awakened by music and at a general agreement as to the specific features that account for them. "If we reduce the multiplicity of emotional terms to a few key words," says Melvin G. Rigg, "we can characterize musical selections as dignified, sad, pleading, tranquil, humorous, happy, exciting and majestic."[2] And with these adjectives the emotional response of the listeners should be described? Words, words, words! What psychological insight do you obtain when you learn that "these mood effects seem to be the result of variations from slow to fast tempo, low to high register, soft to loud intensity, variations in the amount of dissonance, changes from minor to major mood?"

[1] *The Effect Of Music.* A Series of Essays, edited by Max Schön (London, 1927).

This writer, as unable to describe the emotional effects of music as any other diplomate of the American Psychological Association, has sometimes had the strange experience of a certain melody he had once liked awakening a distinct revulsion when it recurred. There was, so to speak, a resistance against its admission into his thoughts. This negativistic attitude could, as far as I was able to see, only be superficially explained by a change of taste, a difference of moods and similar factors. The revulsion also had a different character from that caused by too great familiarity or too frequent hearing. (The Duke in *Twelfth Night* wants to hear "that strain again," but then he says:

"Enough! no more!
'tis not so sweet now as it was before.")

As a matter of fact, some of those melodies, once liked and now disliked, had not been heard or remembered for several years. On the other hand, the tunes were familiar. The best comparison for the attitude toward them is that of a person running into an old acquaintance whom he does not want to recognize, whom he wants to "cut." In the majority of such cases, I could analyze that the determining factor was that the melody was charged with emotions or connected with thoughts that had been rejected or suppressed. The tune suggested an awakening of those emotions, once vividly felt, and the rejection of the melody indicated that this revival was not welcome. The following presents the analysis of a representative case of this kind.

TWO

Many years ago a tune occurred to me at the moment when I opened my appointment book to look up which patients I would see

[2] Program of the Sixtieth Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association. Melvin G. Rigg, "The Problem of Meaning in Music," *The American Psychologist* (July, 1922), VII, 333.

the next day. My glance fell on the name of Helen S., a young girl whose psychoanalysis had begun just a week ago. Helen had several neurotic symptoms and some social difficulties which compelled her to search for help in analytic treatment. Among them she had complained about a very frequent occurrence of blushing on occasions when she herself could find not the slightest reason for the appearance of this annoying symptom. She was an intelligent girl who had graduated from a good college and now functioned well as secretary of a manufacturing company, and she had fought in vain against her persistent blushing for many years. She gave me numerous instances of the occasions on which she felt her face and neck become suddenly very red. It would not have been astonishing if she had blushed when young men complimented her or when risque stories were told in her presence—although blushing on such occasions is considered old-fashioned today and scarcely to be expected from a modern girl of twenty-six years. Helen blushed not only on these occasions, but regularly when she entered the office of her immediate superior, a married woman, perhaps ten years older than she. This boss, Helen asserted, did not like her much, although she spoke and acted rather amiably to her. It was explainable that Helen had blushed deeply when on one occasion she entered her boss's office and found her in suspicious nearness to an elderly gentleman who was not her husband. But Helen felt that her blushing also reached to the neckline whenever she ran into her boss in the corridors or on the elevator, and especially when she had been called to this woman's office for some business reason.

While I thought of Helen whom I would see the next day and of her symptom that had not yet been understood in its origin, I heard in my mind a melody that I did not immediately recognize. I knew it was very familiar, but I needed some effort to realize that it was the Austrian anthem, the impressive melody which Haydn had composed almost two hundred years ago. Only when the old melody recurred did I know what it was, and only then did the first line, so familiar since childhood, come to mind:

Gott erhalte, Gott beschütze
Unser Kaiser, unser Land . . .

Why was it that—of all things—the Austrian anthem occurred to

me when I thought of Helen's blushing? It was during the war. My native country had joined Hitler, and my personal experiences connected with Austria were certainly bitter. I had never been a patriot. As far back as I can remember, the personality of Kaiser Franz Josef of whom the anthem speaks had not impressed me much. He was a very conventional and not very clever old man, rather pathetic in his insignificance. When I examined my feelings toward him, I could detect only a mixture of pity and mockery. But it is not only possible, but even likely, that I was full of reverence and awe when I was a little boy and had heard so much about *"unser Kaiser."*

And Haydn's anthem, the *Volkshymne*, as we called it? I sang it, of course, many times in school and have heard it sung much more. I remember having heard those solemn chords only a few weeks ago on the radio. They were incorporated in Haydn's *Emperor Quartet* where the famous melody appears in beautiful variations.

But what has the Imperial Anthem to do with Helen's neurotic symptom? There is not the slightest trace of a connection discernible between that young girl from Nebraska and Austria or the old Kaiser. As a matter of fact, during the first interview she had said a few things from which I concluded that she was not completely sure of Austria's exact location. It seemed that her geographical and ethnological ideas about Central Europe were rather mixed. (It occurred to me here that a Viennese acquaintance who came to this country as a refugee in 1938 had told me that a lady at a dinner party had asked her whether the Czechs were colored people.)

What is the meaning of the National Anthem occurring to me in that context? I am determined to find out what the melody wants to convey to me.

Together with Haydn's melody the first lines occur:

God save, God protect
Our Kaiser, our land . . .

Did I once feel those warm and devout emotions toward Franz Josef which the melody expresses? . . . I tried to remember the old man as I had seen him several times. Poor old man whose wife and son were murdered and who experienced the collapse of his dynasty and of his country. A sentimental patriotic song, often heard in the beginning of the First World War, crossed my mind: "There in Schön-

brunn an old gentleman sits . . ." But while I still tried to recall the forgotten lines of that song describing Franz Josef, filled with grief, sitting in his summer castle in Schönbrunn, a mocking Viennese verse comes to mind:

Auf dem Dache sitzt ein Greis,
Der sich nicht zu helfen weiss.

Perhaps translatable as:

On the roof there sits an old schmoo,
Who does not know what he should do.

A wave of reverent and affectionate feeling coming from forgotten depths was thus broken by a counterwave of contempt and dislike.

THREE

At this point I became aware that I was dilly-dallying and ducking the task I had imposed on myself. Is there anything unpleasant connected with it in my thoughts, anything personal I don't want to know, or don't want to acknowledge? I have to make a new effort and face the music, in this particular case the Austrian anthem. It is in my thoughts connected with the person of the Kaiser with whom its first lines are concerned.

What was the last thought before I interrupted myself? Oh yes, the Kaiser in Schönbrunn. Near his castle was the cottage of Katharina Schratt, the youthful and pretty actress who had been his mistress for so many years. The Viennese who were, of course, familiar with the affair of their old Kaiser looked at it with sympathy and human understanding. They used to say that the old man, who was an early riser, took a walk every morning from the castle to the cottage of Kathi Schratt to have breakfast with her. I have seen Katharina Schratt, who was fresh and doll-like, in several parts she played in the Burgtheater. The Burgtheater stands on the Ringstrasse (the beautiful main avenue of Vienna, twice as wide as New York's Fifth Avenue).

Ringstrasse, Freud, fiacre . . . I am repeating these three words

that had occurred to me, but there is nothing else. . . . Something had flashed across the screen of my mind, but it had vanished. . . . Ringstrasse . . . oh yes, there is a memory and it is, of course, connected with Freud, too! It was before the great war—it all comes back to me now—and on a summer evening. The Vienna Analytic Society had its meeting then on the Schottenring, and afterward we —Freud and some of his students—walked to the Löwenbrau, a restaurant on the Ringstrasse right across from the Burgtheater, and we sat there at tables in the open air. On the other side of the Ringstrasse a great patriotic demonstration was taking place. The crowd, some speakers, some companies of the Viennese regiment. . . . There was much shouting, but then the Austrian anthem sounded clearly through the night. Freud said to me, who sat near him, "Yet, it is a moving melody."

The occasion remained in my memory because it was one of the few times on which I heard Freud mention music, and one of the few times I heard him express something like a patriotic feeling. He was otherwise far from being an Austrian patriot. He understood the foibles, fancies and frailties of our fellow countrymen and he sometimes made fun of the mental sloppiness and muddled thinking of the Viennese. I never heard him speak of Franz Josef himself, but I saw him smile when someone told one of the many anecdotes that made the Kaiser appear as a glorified old moron, and I once heard Freud himself parodistically repeat the stock phrase the Emperor used on all possible and quite a few impossible occasions: "It was very nice and I enjoyed it very much" (*"Es was sehr schön und es hat mich sehr gefreut"*).

There is something else along with Freud, the Ringstrasse and a fiacre. . . . But I am losing myself in useless memories and anecdotes while I should concentrate on the National Anthem and the Kaiser. The Ringstrasse. . . . In my imagination I see the Imperial Palace and then the Kriegsministerium. (Both stand on the Ringstrasse.) On the latter building a Latin sentence is engraved: *Si vis pacem, para bellum* (If you want peace, prepare for war). Freud varied that Latin proverb at the end of a paper written during the great war: *Si vis vitam, para mortem* (If you want life, prepare for death).[3] This paper is, as far as I know, the only one of Freud's in which a trace of patriotic feeling can be discovered.

[3] "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," Collected Papers, Vol. IV.

Austria really prepared for the war in those years before 1914. It is, however, doubtful whether she wanted peace. Perhaps the old Kaiser did, but the supreme commander of the army, Conrad von Hötzendorff, and his staff, as well as the high aristocracy, wanted war. Many months before its outbreak Freud predicted that war was imminent. There was that quietness before the storm in the atmosphere of Vienna.

Many years later, after the war, Freud told me that at this time he had an officer of high rank in treatment, and that he had to break off the cure because the patient could not conquer his moral scruples against talking about state secrets, especially about the highly confidential mobilization plan of the Austrian general staff. . . . The patient's avowed silence on these subjects blocked his way and finally made the continuation of the analytic treatment impossible, because the thoughts of the patient circled around those secrets in the tense years before the war.

It all now comes back to me, the whole story Freud told me on that walk on the Ringstrasse. (Oh, here is the Ringstrasse again!) The secrecy under oath was, of course, only a side issue. The main theme was the analytic understanding of the neurotic symptom. The patient, the Duke K., was the personal adjutant of the old Kaiser. (There is Franz Josef again—"God save, God protect our Kaiser"—and the Austrian anthem.) Amongst other nervous symptoms the patient suffered from an intense fear that he would blush (erythrophobia). He sometimes blushed without apparent reason, and he regularly blushed when he entered the Kaiser's room, which was, of course, many times every day. Freud explained to me during that conversation on the Ringstrasse that the fear of blushing, if very pronounced, reveals paranoid trends in patients. The blushing itself, he said, is frequently an expression of unconscious homosexual tendencies. The physical symptom results from a displacement of the excitement from below to above, that means that the blood congestion appears on the face instead of the genitals. I no longer remember whether Freud then added that blushing amounts to an exhibitionistic symptom revealing suppressed homosexual excitement, but I am certain that he interpreted the duke's persistent blushing as an expression of his unconscious passive-feminine attitude toward the old Kaiser.

The memory of that conversation with Freud, emerging after several decades, tied the major part of associations (National Anthem . . . the old Kaiser—Ringstrasse—Freud) together and connected them with the point of departure, namely, with the blushing of my patient Helen. The little puzzle of why the Austrian anthem occurred to me when I thought of Helen and her symptom is thus brought to a satisfactory, if not an elegant solution. The melody by Haydn emerged as a musical representative of a memory of the conversation in which Freud told me about the adjutant who was always blushing when he appeared before the Emperor. It reminded me via that anthem not only of a most significant instance of such blushing, but also of its meaning as a vasomotoric expression of an unconscious sexual tension in the case of that aristocrat. The thought association Ringstrasse is overdetermined: it was on this avenue that Freud told me about the case of the Kaiser's adjutant; it was there the Imperial Anthem was played, and where Freud said that sentence in praise of Haydn's melody.

The Austrian anthem had preconsciously reminded me of Freud's explanation of that case and had paved the way for the understanding of the blushing of my patient Helen. The emergence of the Imperial Anthem in my thoughts would thus not be different from the appearance of any other associations between the point of their departure and that of their destination. But would it not have been more economical if the memory of that conversation had emerged directly? What is the meaning of the music? The melody must have been the bearer or expression of some emotion involved in the train of my thoughts, of an emotion that was not manifested in the lines of the anthem.

FOUR

I put this consideration aside for the time being because I was aware that there was an unsolved factor in that little problem: there was another element in my thought association, another link that dropped under the table and was forgotten—the fiacre. (The word, taken from the French, meant, in Vienna, a coach with two horses.) The problem is not quite solved. It is as if you had a jigsaw puzzle with too many pieces. Did I perhaps see the Kaiser in a state coach

on the Ringstrasse? No, I don't remember that, but of course, I saw Freud riding in a fiacre several times. He used that vehicle when he had to see patients at their homes and sometimes when he was very tired returning home late from his lecture. . . . There is a memory, but it connects Freud with a coach only in a very peripheral sense: I once heard him use an expression which was traditional with the Viennese cabbies and which they used to say in the old days when asked what the fare would be: "Your Grace, we shall not need any judge," or, "We shall not need any court action to decide that." This sentence means, of course, that passenger and coachman will agree on a fare, and is a friendly admonition to the passenger not to worry about the money. At the same time, it avoids stating a sum and leaves it to the generosity of the passenger to pay as much as he pleases, but certainly not as little as he would like to. The moral pressure under which he is put by that traditional sentence compels him in most cases to overpay or to give a large tip. I heard Freud repeat that sentence in undiluted Viennese dialect when someone told him that a professor of psychiatry who had been antagonistic to psychoanalysis suddenly discovered that there was really no difference between the old views of psychiatry and Freud's theories, and that there was, of course, also no conflict between Freud's views and those of Jung and Adler. Freud parodistically quoting the sentence of the fiacre cabbies, *"Euer Gnaden, mir wer'n ka'n Richter brauch'n,"* made fun of the Viennese mental sloppiness which in this case evaded all serious discussions for the sake of peace, preferring a convenient and cheap eclecticism.

But again there is that unerring feeling that I myself am avoiding something unpleasant in my thoughts by recalling little events, telling myself anecdotes. It is as if I myself were saying, "We shall need no judge, Your Grace," or were expressing the hope not to be judged. If I want to find out the thought connection between the National Anthem, the Kaiser, Freud, Ringstrasse and fiacre, I have to put my nose to the grindstone again. . . . Freud, fiacre, Ringstrasse, the time before the war. . . . And now a memory comes up, and I know immediately that this is it, and I recognize why I tried to avoid it in my thoughts. It is very embarrassing. Therefore I have not thought of it for many years and did my best to avoid thinking of it now. I excluded it unconsciously from the train of my associations.

It was not before the war, but a few months after its outbreak, and it was, of course, on the Ringstrasse. I had been called to the army immediately. A few days after I entered the service, I walked on the Ringstrasse in uniform. I still remember that I did not feel too comfortable in the unaccustomed military outfit. I must have been deep in thought while I walked, and suddenly I became aware that someone was waving at me, vividly bending from a fiacre passing by. Only then I recognized Freud. Happily surprised and entirely forgetting that I was in uniform, I took my cap off to him. (In Austria men recognize each other by taking off their hats.) A split second later, of course, I realized my blunder—I had greeted him like a civilian instead of saluting like a soldier and was very much embarrassed. I wondered what Freud must have thought of my ridiculous mistake and I felt that I was blushing heavily.

Thus, here is the personal experience that connects the elements Freud and Ringstrasse with Helen's blushing and a memory of my own. I had, as far as I can remember, no inclination to blush, yet on rare occasions I had felt the same as my patient, and no doubt for similar emotional reasons—for instance, when I behaved so clumsily at the encounter with Freud on the Ringstrasse, I was twenty-six years old, had my Ph.D., was a married man, and yet I blushed like a young girl of seventeen when she runs into a young man with whom she is in love.

The comparison I just used is not accidental and leaves no doubt that my blushing on that occasion was an expression of an unconscious homosexual attitude toward Freud whom I so much admired. The continuation of my feelings of admiration and devotion into the depth region where unconscious trends are living would reveal there passive-feminine tendencies toward the master and friend. Tracing these trends back to childhood would undoubtedly lead to the same feelings I had as a little boy toward my father, whose place Freud took in my thought later on. The old Kaiser, the father of the country, had been a father-representative figure in my childhood and must have then been unconsciously an object of similar affectionate tendencies. Nothing of such emotions is recalled, but all logical laws speak for their existence and efficiency in early boyhood. (As some associations, especially some thoughts about Franz Josef prove, affectionate and tender feelings do not exclude hostile and rebellious trends. A patient told me the other day that his little son, age three,

who was forbidden to do something, ran toward him with a gesture that was "half attack, half caress.") The thought connection between my patient's blushing and the anthem expressing devotion and tenderness for the old Kaiser, has, if analyzed, not only psychological significance, but opens the avenue to the analytic understanding of that symptom. It casts a light on the unconscious homosexual meaning of Helen's blushing which appears as soon as she enters her boss's room, exactly as the same symptom appeared when the adjutant had to speak to Franz Josef.

The emergence of the memory of my own experience was by no means a smooth and unopposed procedure. As this report shows, several times I came close to the memory and I avoided it. Strong counter-tendencies prevented it from appearing on the surface. The same resistances that operate in our patients and block the entrance of unpleasant memories into conscious thinking hinder the acknowledgment of certain emotions and tendencies we do not want to admit to ourselves. There are few trends in a man which he would reject as vehemently and indignantly as the assumption that he should be used sexually by a man in the same manner as a woman. Everything —let me correct myself, almost everything—in a man resists such an idea, and yet there is such a repressed tendency in each man.

Is it not astonishing that so many and such intense resistances struggled against the re-emergence of those repressed emotions. This reluctance manifested itself in the fact that I had difficulty in recognizing the hymn, and the resistance increased in intensity the closer my associations came to that embarrassing memory. The attentive reader will have observed that there were devices of deviation; for instance, the deflection of my thoughts when they arrived at the idea of Freud, Ringstrasse, fiacre—that was too close for comfort. They were turned away from the goal to that saying: "We shall not need any judge." At the end, after conquering the last resistance, they arrived at that memory of my embarrassment after the encounter with Freud, my blushing and finally at recognition of its unconscious significance in terms of a repressed passive-feminine attitude toward Freud.

The emergence of the Austrian anthem cannot be conceived of otherwise than of the return of the repressed material in the shape of a descendant or offspring of the original. The Haydn melody is certainly distant enough from the expression of the repressed homosexual tendencies, but its connection with the person of the Kaiser and the forgotten affection for him are so distinct that the original emotions can be conjectured. The continuation of those emotions back into childhood leads to the same kind of feelings toward my father, their continuation into the years of manhood to the assumption of the unconscious feminine attitude toward Freud.

More than the obsolete lines of that anthem, the devout melody by Haydn, brought long-forgotten emotions to the surface. The emergence of the hymn in connection with the blushing of my patient was baffling, but our unconscious has reasons of which our reason does not know anything.

CHAPTER VI

Mockery in Music

ONE

THE BEST we learned about expressions of unconscious defiance and mockery was obtained in the analysis of neurotic symptoms and symptomatic actions. In spite of the diversity of their forms, these expressions form certain patterns and are characterized by common features that reveal themselves only after their secret origin and meaning have been recognized in the analytic interpretation. The main difficulty in deciphering their unconscious meaning seems to be that they have an archaic character. It is as if they expressed what they have to say in some ancient, unknown tongue. Their way of communication is foreign to our rational thinking.

Here is an example. A young woman, Zoe, who came to this country when she was a child, as an immigrant from Greece, reported that she went to a Catholic parochial school because there was no other good school in the neighborhood. The nuns endeavored to convert the girl to Catholicism and often used the argument that there are only small and unimportant differences between her faith and the Roman Catholic religion. Zoe, who had first vehemently resisted them, asked for time to consider the suggestion. When she was finally asked for her decision, she declared, in a conference with the Mother Superior and the other nuns, that she would be ready to become a Roman Catholic if one of the nuns present, Sister Benedicta,

would go over to the Greek Orthodox church, since the differences between the churches were unimportant and immaterial. The meaning of the reaction can only be: If it is true that the differences between the religions are unimportant, Sister Benedicta can join the Greek Orthodox church while I become a Roman Catholic. The girl showed in this way the absurdity of the argument she had so often heard in favor of her conversion. Such reactions seem to have neither rhyme nor reason, but they follow a logic of their own, the same logic expressed in the disillusioned sentence: "Be Kent unmannerly, when Lear is mad."

It is surprising to discover that music, limited by its acoustic character, can express mockery and defiance. There are, of course, enough passages in operas in which mockery is expressed in song and in the accompaniment of the orchestra (the courtesans in *Rigoletto,* Iago in *Othello,* Falstaff's monologue on honor, Mephisto in Gounod's *Faust,* Beckmesser's song in the *Meistersinger* and so on). But we mean, of course, "pure" music, compositions in which mockery, contradictions and defiance are expressed by musical means alone, without the help of words.

The brilliant score of Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* presents many passages that express the opinion, "That is silly," or, "That is nonsense," with purely musical means. The poor vagabond and wise fool, Till Eulenspiegel (d.1350), whose amusing parleys and practical jokes abound in German folklore, is portrayed in Strauss's work in dazzling colors and with full mastery of instrumentation. Eulenspiegel's triumph over bourgeois dullness, haughtiness and vanity as over the pretentiousness of the Philistines comes to a surprisingly distinct expression in the composition. The listener to Strauss's orchestral work will hear, for instance, the inversion of a musical phrase without consciously thinking of the meaning it expresses. Unconsciously he senses that the inversion is a means of expressing violent contradiction and mockery. Similar to the dreamer, the musician is restricted by his material in his possibilities of presenting thoughts, opinions and logical relations. He can express certain ideas—for instance, a judgment—only in a figurative manner, in the presentation of forming or shaping the tonal material. As in dreams, the inversion of a part of the material often expresses contemptuous opposition or mockery, in the sense "No, on the contrary." The musical somersaults in *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* are representative instances in which a formal element conveys the expression of such unconscious mockery and defiance.

TWO

Psychological observation can convince everyone that mockery, defiance and sarcasm sometimes appear in his own musical associations, mostly in connection with a text, but occasionally without it.

Here are a few examples which show that some passages from arias were put into the service of those tendencies that have remained preconscious or unconscious. The procedure can be compared to the transformation of some famous paintings into comic strips.

In the introduction to my book *A Psychologist Looks at Love,* I recalled that, returning from the Metropolitan Opera one evening, I was haunted by the Canzone from the second act of *Le Nozzi di Figaro.* The sweet melody of *"Voi chi sapete"* followed me home. (The performance was, to my mind, of course, not to be compared with the last performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* I had seen in the Vienna Opera, where Mahler led singers and orchestra to a perfect expression of the smiling rococo work in its tender and playful tunes.) It was certainly not only the melodic beauty of that aria that made me sing it again and again under my breath, because I realized later on that the tune took on a revolutionary, aggressive character alien to Mozart's music. Those lines:

> You who know the heart desires
> Tell me is it love . . .

sounded suddenly teasing as though they were making fun of someone. I had been occupied in my thoughts with the psychological problem of love and had wondered about how little and how insignificant the insights are which psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, the experts of emotions, contributed to that important subject. This musical association led my thoughts back to the book on love I planned to write.[1]

Almost twenty-five years before another aria from the first act of the same opera had haunted me:

[1] Published by Rinehart & Co. (New York, 1944).

Will einst der Herr Graf ein Tänzlein wagen,
Mag er's mir sagen,
Ich spiel ihm ja auf!

If the Herr Graf is after a little amusement,
He may go dancing,
But I'll play the tune!

I was then planning to write a book on Mahler in which I wanted to present a psychoanalytic interpretation of this composer's development. When, in place of some themes from one of Mahler's symphonies which then preoccupied my thoughts, that defiant tune emerged, I was surprised and could not understand what it meant. Later on I recognized that I must have thought of the reception such a book on Mahler would get from the Viennese music critics. These considerations must have led me to the name of Max Graf, then one of the most influential and intelligent critics, who had at first praised Mahler's works, but later, offended by the composer's uninhibited candor and violence, had turned against him.[2] Max Graf had already expressed his low opinion of Mahler's Fourth Symphony and had from then on attacked the composer's works with sharply negative comments, which resulted in a planned *crescendo* of rejection and had a considerable effect in Vienna and Germany. I must have thought I would not take the malicious criticism of Herr Graf lying down. I wanted to play the tune to the Herr Graf. (*Graf* is the German word for *count*, in Beaumarchais' and Mozart's work *Alma viva*.)

I would also know which tune to play, namely, I would remind him that Mahler once quietly told him, after his critical review of the Fourth Symphony, "You need not explain your attitude. You just did not understand the work," and when the critic, irritated, pointed out that Mahler had not been of the same opinion when the Second Symphony was praised by him, the composer courteously answered, "You are very mistaken. I was always of the same opinion. You did not understand me when you praised me either."[3] As Max

[2] For details compare the article "Mahlers Feinde" by Richard Specht (*Musikblatter des Anbruch* [April, 1920], 2. Jahrgang, No. 1, 7-8).

[3] Quoted by Richard Specht in the above-mentioned article.

Graf's later books show, in the years after Mahler's death, the critic revised his opinion of the composer's symphonies, whose value as artistic creation he came to recognize. The question is not whether I was then right or wrong, or whether I was cocksure or only self-confident. The interesting point here is that I caught myself humming that aria of *Figaro* and understood only later that the musical association meant I anticipated that I would give the critic a piece of my mind. The differences in the two examples are as obvious as their common features: in the first, the musical association makes fun of the psychologists and psychiatrists who pretend to know all about love. The lines:

You who know the heart desires
Tell me is it love . . .

use the text of the *Figaro* aria teasingly, turn the delicious tune into a defiant one. Here the opposition is directed against a large group of professional people.

The second instance of the use or abuse of a melody from the same opera is not as alien to the character of the original. Figaro's aria is by its very nature defiant, although its rebelliousness is mitigated by the composer's serenity and gracious playfulness. Its musical character is rather a laughing protest against oppression than a serious and violent aggression. The word *Graf* in its text designates the title of nobility. In my association, it is used as the name of the person I am challenging in my thoughts. In the following examples no names will be mentioned, but name-calling cannot be avoided because the musical associates I quote were abusive in their aggressiveness.

The instances of this kind I jotted down have another characteristic in common: they contain attacks against authors who were rightly or wrongly considered experts in the field of my own profession, psychologists or psychiatrists. They reflect my opposition to and my fight with the "expert" of whom I made fun in the musical associations occurring to me. Such a lack of respect and the malice toward some scholars is certainly regrettable from a moral point of view. I am not speaking here as a moralist, but as a psychologist. I was and still am powerless to change the nature and the course of the thoughts occurring to me.

THREE

The worst case of name-calling in musical associations, I have to confess, shows not only a lack of dignity, but also an exaggerated sensitiveness to criticism. The book *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, which I mentioned before, has certainly many weaknesses and shortcomings beside a few good original ideas. The young psychiatrist who reviewed the book in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* expressed his opinion that what was good in the book was not new, and what was new was not good.[4] It was, however, not the content of this critical comment that annoyed me, but the sneering and snarling tone of the review. Its last sentence, alluding to a new concept of romantic love, reads as follows: "If a man claims to build a better mousetrap, he should be prepared to demonstrate more about it than simply those defects which entitle it to be somewhat dubiously termed a new mousetrap."

Still thinking of this final pronouncement with the admiration its subtle irony deserves, I caught myself humming a tune from Rodgers' and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma*. It is the parodistic recitative in which Curly laments the dead Jud Fry, praising the excellent qualities of the man who stands at his side, and who repeats his lines in the way a congregation responds to the prayer of the minister. The first lines of that lament bewailing the dead, and yet still alive, antagonist are:

Pore Jud is daid,
Pore Jud is daid,
All gather round his cawfin now and cry.
He had a heart of gold,
And he wasn't very old;
Oh, why did such a feller have to die?

Why did this parodistic lament occur to me? It is not very funny, and its musical value is, compared with other melodies of the operetta, not considerable. I had enjoyed *Oklahoma* the week before, and I liked the tunes "Oh, what a beautiful morning," "People will say we're in love" and others, but that lament did not appeal to me much. Why did that litany emerge? I had not thought of it since the performance of the musical comedy.

[4] The *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (1946), V, 257.

It is a humorous imitation of a minister's lamenting a dead man, but the man is very much alive and stands beside Curly as he recites the parody. Then the name of the subject of the lament comes into mind. Curly calls him *Pore Jud*, and this name rhymes with the last syllable of the name of that reviewer. It seems I compared my young, critical colleague with Jud, and I wished him dead, buried. As Curly did Jud, I killed in my thoughts the haughty critic of whose intelligence I had no high opinion. But that murderous wish was not conscious. It revealed itself in the association by which I buried the hostile critic by magic with musical accompaniment. The association was stimulated by the name of Jud and the recollection of the recent performance of *Oklahoma*.

Only the first line of that lament "Pore Jud is daid" came to mind at that time, the continuation was only vaguely remembered. There was, I dimly recalled, a hypocritical praise of the dead and alive Jud, to the effect that he had loved his fellow men, loved the birds and the mice in the barn and treated the rats like equals, which was appropriate, followed again by the litany:

Pore Jud is daid . . .

Here is an allusion to that final sentence of the critical review taking my book to task, to the elegant comparison of it with a mousetrap. . . . In my unconscious or preconscious thought, revealed by that emerging tune, I must have expressed the opinion that the critic who wrote his review in a kind of intellectual twilight had confused two kinds of rodents. The musical association goes, it seems, beyond killing the reviewer in my imagination. It adds insult to the imagined deadly injury. It says: No, my book is not a mousetrap. It is a trap for rats.

Looking back at the malicious nature of this invective launched by means of a tune, one might wonder that in our thoughts the noble art of music lends itself equally to benedictions and blasts.

FOUR

Compared with this expression of vicious and brutal invective, the two remaining instances are relatively harmless. The musical

reminiscences in both cases emerged while I was reading a book, and they represent critical impressions expressed in the form of melodies. The first instance concerns the study of a clinical and experimental study of fifty men of college age undertaken by the workers at the Harvard Psychological Clinic.[5] In this volume is a chapter which is dedicated to a "Musical Reverie Test." This test is supposed to be instrumental in the exhibition of fantasies which reveal unconscious themes. The experimenters try to discover what imagery or dramatic occurrences are commonly suggested by certain musical compositions. Strauss's *Don Juan*, the Fourth Symphony by Tschaikovsky, Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun* and so on are played to the subjects of the experiment. The test demonstrates that the structure of the music is influential in awakening characteristic attitudes and images, "the form of which is influenced by the subjects' past experiences." The result of the exploration was that two kinds of mental processes could be observed—unorganized free associations and unified fantasies. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave of experimental psychology to tell us this.

The description, analysis and interpretative summary of the case material is superficial and meaningless. The trifling, but pretentiously offered result swims in an alphabet soup of abbreviated technical terms which makes a glossary at the end of the volume necessary.

The name "Musical Reverie Test" awakened the curiosity of the psychologist, but this kind of exploration in personality gave me the impression of a lot of empty activity and mental effort wasted in a pseudo-scientific experiment. Much ado about nothing. This half-formed idea, however, did not emerge as a critical opinion, but as a tune. While I forced my attention to concentrate on the chapter, full of pretentiousness and display of scientific precision, the aria "I got plenty of nuttin' " from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* emerged in my mind.

Another example is of recent date, and the reaction, revealed in a musical idea, has a very different character. The tune occurred to me while I was reading a book by a gifted, especially intellectually alert psychoanalyst whose prose has some annoying mannerisms. There is,

[5] *Explorations In Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 550-52.

for instance, an overabundance of quotations. Quotations as introduction and at the head of each chapter: sentences by Talleyrand, Napoleon, Emerson, Dostoievsky, Dickens, Voltaire, Moore, St. Augustine and so on—a display of wide reading and learning. It is as if the author were showing off to the reader and saying: Look, what a well-educated and well-informed man I am! It reads as if it were an enlarged or hypertrophic edition of Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*. The writer succeeds in inserting into the last two pages quotes from Byron, Samuel Johnson, Pierre Charron, Rousseau, Rochefoucauld, Ibsen, Sir William Osler, Donald Robert, Perry Marquis, Thomas Raynesford and Lounsbury. Less would be more. To use a comparison: it is as if a woman is not only overaware of the physical gifts nature has bestowed upon her, and is not content with displaying her charm, but also must overload herself with costume jewelry. Quotations from great writers have their place in a psychological presentation if they are rarely and appropriately inserted, and if they are absorbed in the writer's personality to such an extent that they seem to be not only akin to his way of thinking, but almost extensions or variations of it. The many quotations used by this writer clearly do not spring from inner experience, but serve as an exhibition of extensive reading. In the middle of his purely cerebral conceptions they strike us as unorganic and artificial, not grown from the subsoil of experiences, but pasted on, superimposed. This impression is emphasized by the clearly felt contrast between the quoted inspired sentences and the sober, unmusical, pedantic, purely intellectual and essentially cold personality of the author. If his book on the psychology of the writer had not proved it, his quotational affluence in the middle of sober rationality would reveal how alien the spirit of artistic creation is to his nature.

These impressions were increasing in their intensity, but were not clearly perceived and neither consciously thought nor formulated while I read the book. In the place of their realization the first bars of a delicate, slow tune appeared and were immediately followed by the words of the Schubert song:

Ihr Blümlein alle,
Die sie mir gab . . .

The little flowers
Which to me she gave . . .

Then the melody and the text of the lied was continued:

Why droop ye thus, hanging each sad head
As if ye knew all my hopes were fled,
Ye blossoms all so sad and white,
Why now so humid, once so bright?

I realized, of course, what the emergence of the lied meant. Its tune expressed the impression I had felt but which had not been articulate: the impression that those quotations are to be compared to "withered flowers." Something like this title of the Schubert lied or a comparison with artificial flowers must have hovered before me when I read those pages. My criticism of the psychoanalyst's style did not present itself in clear verbal presentations. The emerging tune said it with flowers.

FIVE

The contrast of the content of this criticism with the delicate touch of the music reminds us again that the most beautiful of arts is abused rather than used in my associations. Did not that same Franz Schubert, the greatest composer of songs, praise his art with the words:

Du holde Kunst,
In wieviel grauen Stunden
Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt,
Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb entzunden,
Hast mich in eine bessre Welt entrückt.

O Music, Music, come and light
My heart's dark places,
Arouse to life my spirit's inmost ear,
Awake in me such love no time effaces.

The spirit in Schubert's address *To Music* is very different from that in my associations. Did they not desecrate that lied *Withered Flowers,* turn its elegiac tune into an expression of mocking criticism and Mozart's arias into defiant declarations? Have I, remembering

those utterances of malice and hostility, still the right to appeal to music in the way that warmhearted Schubert song does:

In many a gloomy hour
When I have bowed before the storms of life
Hast thou revived my heart with glowing power . . .

It has indeed! Yes, it seemed sometimes as if it were the only art that had this elevating power over me, the capacity of awakening love of mankind in despairing moods. Its message was then clearly conveyed. This does not exclude the fact that at other times hostile and defiant impulses crossed the threshold of preconscious thinking in the disguise of familiar tunes.

CHAPTER VII

Melodies and Memories

ONE

MY MEMORY, otherwise reliable in such things, sometimes threatens to fail me when I want to remember who composed the two *Liebeslieder Walzer*. I have heard those graceful melodies often enough, and I know, of course, that Johannes Brahms wrote them, but it needs a little effort to remember his familiar name as their composer. There is a kind of small mental pause before the name is called to mind. Yet the character of that uncertainty is not the same as in other cases when I try to remember: "Who wrote this?" It is rather the conquest of a doubt or the expression of some disbelief. When this weakness of my memory occurred, I decided to find out what caused this special failing. Such a decision can be compared to making up one's mind to clean a neglected drawer. The analytic method lends itself rather well to the service of a mental vacuum cleaner in cases where emotional dust prevents our memory from smooth functioning.

The first attempt at free thought association revealed that my doubt or disbelief hung somewhere on the word *Liebe,* as if I were doubting that those waltzes really express genuine feelings of love, as if it is hard to believe that Johannes Brahms could have been deeply in love with a woman. My subjective concept of the composer is that of a shy, remote and inwardly cool personality, unable to express his emotions freely except in music. This impression is,

of course, not based on knowledge of his life history, of which I know but little, and I wonder about it. I argue with myself: What about that deep and lasting affection for the widow of Robert Schumann? If this intimate and tender emotion for Clara Schumann for so many years was not love, what else was it? But the counter-voice makes itself heard: In spite of all intimacy, of all protestations of love and of passion, he never approached her sexually. He loved and desired her in his mind only. . . . What in Heaven's name kept him back? . . . She was fourteen years older and had, if I am not mistaken, seven children. . . . They were both free, loved each other—why did he not possess her in those many years? . . . There were, I am sure, caresses, something of what is called "heavy petting" today, but nothing else. . . . *"Tout excepte ça,"* say the Parisians: "all but that." She was perhaps a mother-representative figure to him and as such sexually untouchable, while he satisfied his sexual needs by relations with degraded objects, streetwalkers. As a matter of fact, the latter point is detailed by the biographers of the composer,[1] but I know it from more direct sources.

The image of my Aunt Resi (Viennese abbreviation of Thérèse) appeared in my memory. I remember Tante Resi as an old woman, but she was perhaps middle-aged when she died, and I was eight or nine years old. She lived in the Wieden, a quarter of Vienna that appeared suburban to us children at the time, in a small apartment on a narrow side street. She had been a widow for many years, living on a small pension. She kept her rooms immaculately clean and neat, and I still remember how carefully we children had to wipe our shoes before we were allowed to enter her apartment. There we had to sit quietly on the couch and were forbidden to touch any of the numerous pictures, knickknacks and whatnots which stood on little tables. We did not like to visit Aunt Resi because we had to be on our best behavior with her, but our mother took us there every Saturday. In my family they frequently told the story of how Aunt Resi promised my little sister to leave her a golden bracelet in her will, and that my sister asked her immediately after arriving for the weekly visit, *"Wenn sterbst du schon?"* ("When are you going to die?").

Tante Resi spent many hours of her day sitting at her window

[1] Dr. Edward Hitschmann described this characteristic division of Brahms's love life in a paper "Johannes Brahms und die Frauen," *Die Psychoanalytische Bewegung* (1933), No. 2, Vol. V.

and observing all her neighbors. She knew a lot about each of them and she liked to tell what she knew. Otherwise put, she was a gossip and, if one could trust family hearsay, of a malicious kind. My sister Margaret and I listened, of course, to what our aunt had to say to my mother about her neighbors.

TWO

In my thoughts, Aunt Resi is connected with my early recognition of some facts of life and with Johannes Brahms. It seemed that my aunt's pet hate was a pretty young woman whose windows faced hers in the apartment across the street. Aunt Resi knew quite a few things about this neighbor whom she could see when she leaned out her window. If one believed our aunt, "that woman" was no good, she slept till noon, was lazy and sloppy to a scandalous degree and she saw "men" in her apartment. . . . Aunt Resi mentioned that a Herr von Brahms used to visit this lady regularly and then added something in a lower voice. This Mr. Brahms appeared to me as someone a little lower than a criminal as he kept company with that woman, whom our aunt sometimes called a *Hur* (whore). This was the first time I had ever heard this expression—it was certainly before the age of kindergarten—and I asked my mother on the way home what the word meant. My mother was shocked and forbade me ever to utter that bad word. She gave me no information about its meaning, but even at the time I must have sensed what it signified. Some of that foreknowledge about sex, so regularly met with in children, must have told me why the unknown Herr von Brahms used to visit that woman.

The second time I heard the name of Brahms was not long after Aunt Resi's circumstantial gossip. On a walk with my father we met a stocky old man with a long gray beard. My father took his hat off to him, and the man did likewise to my father. "That was Herr Brahms," said my father. "You know he is the man who wrote many of the lieder Mother sings. He has written beautiful music." I turned around and looked after the man, who walked in a very dignified manner. I remembered that Aunt Resi had spoken of this man, and also in what connection, but I did not tell Father. In spite of her re-

port, it was difficult to imagine Mr. Brahms as a lover—he was old and dignified—but I had to believe Aunt Resi's words.

His name had come up in the meantime because Mother had sung some of his songs, accompanying herself on the piano. I did not like all of them, but some, like the vivid and tuneful *Vergebliches Ständchen,* I could soon hum. When mother once mentioned the composer's name to a lady visitor, I had asked whether that was the same man who used to visit the lady across from Aunt Resi's house. Mother answered, "Yes."

I understood the text of *Vergebliches Ständchen* in a vague and childish manner. I realized that the song is a dialogue between a lover who pleads with a girl to let him come to her in the evening and that she refuses him and finally sends him away. I also knew that the title of the song *Vergebliches Ständchen,* meant, in effect, a disappointed or futile serenade. In a naïve manner I brought the text in intimate thought connection with the personal life of the composer about whom I knew only what Aunt Resi had told my mother. I imagined that "that woman" had once refused to let Mr. Brahms come to her room and that he complained about this misfortune in his song. It seems I did not give much thought to the fact that such behavior on the part of the lady would be in contradiction to her attitude on other occasions when Mr. Brahms spent the night in her apartment, according to Aunt Resi's report. I assumed that the lady once rejected him for reasons of her own.

My mother sang the *Vergebliches Ständchen* occasionally in later years. As a matter of fact, I heard her sing it after I was in my adolescence. The title and the content of the song had, in the meantime, taken on a new and secret meaning for me.

I had then acquired not only an adequate knowledge of what adults do in sex, but also a rich, if vulgar, vocabulary for sexual activities. The boys in school and on the playgrounds were good teachers, and the gutter was an excellent school for a boy curious about the facts of life. The vulgar word for the erection, the upright position of the penis, in Vienna is *Ständer,* a derivative of the word "stand," comparable to the American vulgar expression "hard-on." *Ständchen* could be interpreted as a diminutive of "stand," and would then mean a small or modest erection. The title of the Brahms lied *Vergebliches Ständchen* would, thus understood, mean futile small erection, that is, a state of sexual excitement of the

male without release. In that phase of boyhood the fantasy was filled with sexual images and the interpretation of the song and of its title is not as astonishing as it now sounds. The lascivious fantasy of the "naughty" boy transformed the disappointed serenade into the picture of an erection, not brought to its organic end, a sexual excitement that was frustrated by the cruelty of a girl.

In later years, also, when I read about the relationship of the composer and Clara Schumann, the thought of that lady of easy virtue, Aunt Resi's neighbor, sometimes appeared. It was so persistent that it emerged when I heard the *Vergebliches Ständchen* again. In spite of what mental and emotional maturity I could muster in the meantime, the suspicion remained that the *Ständchen* was futile or the sexual performance of poor Brahms. So stubborn was this impression from boyhood that this thought sometimes emerged disturbingly when I passed the impressive monument to the great composer that stands before the Technical College at Vienna—not far from the street where Aunt Resi and her blond young neighbor lived.

Remnants of that old doubt of Brahms's capabilities as a lover were, it seems, displaced to his authorship of the *Liebeslieder Walzer* as if I were not certain that the master was able to love a woman. Later on there was the puzzling problem of how it was possible that Brahms was so much in love with Clara and yet could regularly visit that slut in a back street of Vienna. I still remember that, during junior high-school years, I read the shocking sentence Gustave Flaubert once wrote to the effect that a young man can worship a certain woman and in spite of it run every evening to prostitutes (*"Un jeune homme peut adorer une femme et aller chaque soir chez les filles"*). But many years had to pass before I found, in Freud's psychoanalytic writing, an explanation of that division in the love life of many men.

Returning in thought to the *Liebeslieder Walzer,* one remembers that the North German Brahms spent most of his life in Vienna, and Johann Strauss was his contemporary. The two composers knew each other well and often met in Vienna and in Ischl, the lovely summer resort near Salzburg. Brahms admired the melodic invention of the Waltz King. Asked to autograph the fan of Alice Strauss, he wrote the first bars of the *Blue Danube* waltz and beneath it: "Alas, not by Johannes Brahms."

This enchanting waltz came to my mind the other day in another connection and with it another memory of young years. It deals with a different aspect of the sexual problems.

THREE

The other night before falling asleep I skimmed through the pages of two books I had read before: *Anatole France en pantoufles* and *Itinéraire de Paris au Buenos Aires* by Jean Jacques Brousson, the master's secretary. The wit and the wisdom, the mordant skepticism and the penetrating insight of Anatole France delighted me again. In a certain passage, the old master of the Villa Said alludes, in conversation with his young, alert secretary, to Remy de Gourmont's *Physiologie de l'amour* and praises the snails as masterpieces of creation because they are male and female simultaneously and can try now one sex and then the other. Their sexual union lasts five or six weeks. Anatole France remarked, "That would be worth while indeed," and added that for us poor humans the pleasure lasts but the time of a lightning flash.

He reminded Brousson of the Capuchin friar, Barbette, who thundered to his audience from the pulpit a few hundred years ago: "You give yourself up to frivolous living and to fornication, you poor people, you are nothing but fools. The game is not worth the candle! In your ecstasy you touch the seventh heaven, but how long do you remain there? If it lasted seven years, seven months, seven days, seven hours only! But it lasts only a moment and in a trice you are already in hell!" The old master certainly imitated the pious indignation of the Capuchin father who tried to convince the faithful that the short duration of sexual pleasure, followed by hell-fire, is, so to speak, a bad investment. Anatole France regretted with Father Barbette the transitoriness of sexual pleasure and pointed out that the snails who are ugly and repugnant animals have some advantages over human beings: they are hermaphrodites, their loves last six weeks and they have an excitatory genital instrument with a long point. "Yes, my friend," Anatole France added, "just this is worth an immortal soul."

The secretary gave a detailed and intimate report of France's lecture tour in Latin America. On board ship, the writer, now almost sixty-five years old, began an affair with a French actress. He admitted to Brousson that she was no youngster—as a matter of fact she was fifty years old—and that her face had many and marked wrinkles, but the rest of her: "Ah! youth itself!" In the meantime, Madame de Cavaillet, his mistress of so many years, sat alone in Paris in despair because the news reaching her left no doubt that Anatole France had made a fool of himself. Brousson reported in his books many witty sayings of his genial master who still did not believe in "pure love." France amused his serious Provençal secretary in elaborating on and embroidering the story Seigneur de Brantôme told in his *Memoires* in 1650: that he met an old man whom he had once known as a young, gallant and handsome fellow and as a favorite of the ladies. He had become a druggist and now manufactured all kinds of excellent drinks. Brantôme visited him, surrounded by his vials, and congratulated him. But the old man confessed to the young one that all his liquors, however excellent, were not as valuable as the wonderful liquid which he had once used and enjoyed so much and of which old age had deprived him.

Did not Schopenhauer praise old age because the sexual desire ceases with it? But it is not true, only the sexual power ceases. A clever German woman, Alice Berend, once wrote that the bad thing in getting old is not that one becomes older, but that one remains young. The French writers are not only more worldly-wise but also more sincere and courageous in sexual matters than the writers of other nations. They candidly state that it is not the desire that is wanting in old age, but the performance. They do not play hide-and-seek with themselves, and they assert that the sexual pleasure is one of the greatest that human life has to offer. What other satisfaction can be compared with it? Achievement, fame, social recognition? Zola's Pascal Rougon, sixty years old, looks back on his life and often feels like cursing his science which he accuses of having stolen from him *"le meilleur de sa virilité."* In Maupassant's *Bel Ami*, an old writer speaks to a younger one in the same vein as Anatole France spoke to young, alert Jean Jacques Brousson, who flattered and envied the famous master: "What use is the goal, fame, if I can't enjoy it any more in the form of love?" And he adds the wonderful sentence: *"Encore quelques baisers et vous serez impuissant."* France himself calls the impotence of old age *"la première mort."*

Yes, the French writers have the courage and the candor to express a high evaluation of sexual satisfaction, and they do not shrink from presenting the sexual misery of old age whose desire is mostly in the mind. There is a lot of talk, serious and flippant, about sexuality in American literature, but what writer speaks as clearly and definitely and in such matter-of-fact manner of certain aspects of sex as the French?

They are neglected or brushed aside even in psychoanalytic literature. Only Freud courageously turned against the moralistic hypocrisy of our society that looks at sexual pleasures condescendingly at best. In some passages of his writings, he speaks of the high evaluation of sexual satisfaction in contrast to a conventional and hypocritical attitude that treats it as if it were secondary and really dispensable. He reports, for instance, that the Turks in the Herzogowina evaluate sexual pleasure above all others and that sexual disturbances make them fall into despair that strangely contrasts with their fatalistic resignation when facing death.[2] A Turkish patient told his doctor, "You know, sir, if that does not function any more, life has no value."

While I was pondering on such a high evaluation of sexuality as is expressed by Zola, Maupassant, France and that Turkish patient, I felt increasingly sleepy and I was gliding into that state between being awake and falling asleep which is favorable to a looser way of thinking. On the threshold of sleep the first bars of the Strauss waltz *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* were suddenly heard by the inner ear. I wondered from where these bubbling rhythms emerged. The face of Johann Strauss appeared in my mind, as I have seen it in photographs and on the monument in the Stadtpark in Vienna: a grand seigneur of music, surrounded by beautiful women. Some memory connected with that monument was stirred up, but I could not grasp it. I was too tired to think. The tune of the *Blue Danube* waltz accompanied me into sleep.

FOUR

A few weeks later I invited a lady to have dinner with me at Fassler's Viennese Room on Fifty-first Street. On the walls of that

[2] In *On The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (New York: 1914).

restaurant are pictures of different places and houses in Vienna, and on the tables are wind-protected candles as at the *Heurigen*, those little restaurants in the suburbs of Vienna, and there is music, too: a piano player and a violinist as well as a singer. Behind the piano is a life-sized bronze bust of Johann Strauss, illuminated hy light from above. For a moment you can have the illusion that you sit again at a *Heurigen*, listening to the old familiar melodies. Now the piano player begins to play, the violinist joins him and there it is: the *Blue Danube* waltz.

That tune in my ears and the hust of Strauss, shining in the candle light in the corner, brought back in a flash the memory for which I had searched in vain the other day. It had not been really forgotten; it was only that I had not thought of it for many, perhaps for forty years. There was the distinct image of the alleys and meadows of the Stadtpark and of that monument of the Waltz King on the right side.

Quite clearly I see the figure in my mind's eye, his face, the full head of hair, the mustache (he dyed both when he became old). The violin under his chin, the bow in an elegant pose. At the right, at the left and on the high arch above the composer's figure are beautiful dancing women whose dresses seem to flow into waves at their feet, the waves of the beautiful blue Danuhe.

And now that scene comes distinctly hack to mind, as if it had been yesterday and not forty-five years. . . . Ah, I was twenty years old and a student of psychology and it was early in the summer, the time before examinations. . . . When we did not have to attend lectures, we took our books to a public garden to study there. Once I sat in the Stadtpark on a bench facing the monument of Johann Strauss. I had the psychology books by Wundt and Ziehen with me and made a determined effort to cram as much knowledge of physiological and psychological facts as possible. There was an old man sitting beside me, comfortably smoking his cigar and sometimes looking into his newspaper. I rarely glanced up from my book. When I once looked after a pretty, young girl who had just passed the bench, I felt that the man smiled at me. He said in a broad Viennese dialect, "Quite good-looking, isn't she? . . . I bet you would not say no, if she would ask you to, would you? . . . Yes, it is nice to be young. . . . You will understand that much better when you become old."

I must have made some inane remarks to the effect that to be old has some advantages also, because the man replied in a vivid manner, "Oh, don't say that, my young friend! Look over there, yes, to that monument." He pointed to the statue of Strauss. "They called him King Johann the Second because his father who was a wonderful conductor was also called Johann. You know, I am a violinist and I played in his orchestra many years. . . . I quit only after he died. Back in 1894—you were a child then and will not remember—they celebrated his fiftieth jubilee as an artist. There was a week of concerts in his honor, a brilliant torch parade, all the streets were full of banners and decorations. The Emperor and the Court congratulated him, and thousands of cables arrived from all over the world to pay homage to him. Verdi and all the great composers wrote and praised him. I shall never forget how he conducted our orchestra on that day in the Theater an der Wien. We played, of course, the *Blue Danube* waltz and all those beautiful tunes. Each of us came over to him and paid his respects. He pressed my hand and he took me aside. And you know what he said? "Look, my dear fellow, what's the use of fame and all that? . . . I *can't* any more, don't you understand, I *can't* any more." The old musician wanted to tell me more about his beloved master, but I had to hurry to a lecture at the university.

"What were you thinking of?" asked the lady who was my dinner guest. "You smiled the way you do when you think of a delightful anecdote." I told her that I had returned in my thoughts to old Vienna and to the time when I was twenty years old. I spoke also of Johann Strauss whose bust glimmered in the candlelight over there and whose sparkling *Blue Danube* waltz the musicians had just finished playing. I told her about his anniversary at which he was celebrated by the Viennese like a god. But I did not tell her of the conversation with the musician in the Stadtpark nor of what Johann Strauss had said at his jubilee.

CHAPTER VIII

Recall by Music

ONE

OTTO BISMARCK, the great German statesman, once remarked that if he could hear the symphonies of Beethoven daily, it would make him more courageous. He felt in them the titanic will power and courage, the indomitable defiance of the composer. We all, however different our personalities, feel the same emotions welling up in those symphonies even when we do not share Bismarck's conviction. (To think that today we can very easily have the opportunity denied to the Iron Chancellor!) Contrast now this emotional communication between composer and listener with the following report: Faithful Schindler once asked Beethoven what the F Minor and the D Minor sonatas meant, and the composer answered, "Read Shakespeare's *Tempest*." Many laborious attempts have been made to interpret every part of those sonatas in this sense and to attribute them to scenes, even to certain lines of the play, none of them successful. It is, it seems to me, futile to connect definite passages with the scenes and words of Shakespeare, because neither the plot nor the ideas of *The Tempest* were the source of the composer's inspiration, but the emotional atmosphere of the play. It is very doubtful that a listener who had never heard of Beethoven's remark would arrive at the idea that the two sonatas have a thought connection with Shakespeare's play.

We have to differentiate between a general emotional attitude in

which we communicate with the composer, so to speak, get in touch with him, and the specific emotional situation in which he created his work and which is or can be very remote from that of his audience in listening to it. It is a mistake when we assume that we experience the mood in which a work was produced, or that we re-create the emotional situation in which it was conceived. We interpret those chords and we hear in them perhaps something that is very different from what the artist heard and tried to express by them. The most and the best we can say about the communication between him and us is that his work recalls and suggests experiences, similar in their basic emotional character to his, however different in their origin and their specific content. The psychological impact of this differentiation becomes immediately obvious when one compares the effects of music with those of other arts. Let us assume that a visitor to the Vatican Gallery looks at the famous Laocoön group. His eyes follow the lines of the three figures, of the priest of Apollo and his two sons, desperately trying to free themselves from the deadly embrace of the snake. The visitor feels tentatively the emotion of the victims of the monster. He vicariously feels threatened by the irresistible pressure and terrified in increasing breathlessness. Besides this emotional effect, even prior to it, is a clear and precise perception of the situation the sculptor presents in his work. This situation is in no way ambiguous and cannot be interpreted except in one sense. Music has not the same definiteness of content, that is obvious. But it does not even have the same emotional clarity and certainty. A passage from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony does not limit and restrict the listener to one definite, distinct and special emotion. We cannot assert that the composition suggests a certain emotion the artist felt in creating it, only that there must have been in him an emotional attitude akin to that which we experience when we listen to it.

The preceding general remarks should serve as introduction to some psychological considerations on the character of musical associations. Whatever else they may be, they belong to the group of recollections, and their investigation is essentially a part of the psychology of memory. They bring back emotions and ideas that occurred when we heard a composition in the past. They recall thoughts or feelings we experienced when we first perceived the melodies that now come to mind. The products of our imagination

and the emotions with which we listened to a Tschaikovsky symphony are, of course, individually different. They are not easy to focus and difficult to put into words. Many experiments have been made to define and describe the mental and emotional processes experienced in listening to music. For instance, certain groups of college students, men and women, were asked to depict as precisely as possible the kind of thoughts and emotions experienced at the performance of a composition by Ravel, Paderewski, Foster and so on. The material obtained in this scientific manner of experiment was put into the shape of graphs and curves, schedules, indexes and statistical tables. So much work and so little information, so much data and so little important psychological result! Psychological investigation in this area is in reality in its infancy and speaks baby talk, but pretends to express itself in scientific terms. The effect of this make-believe is comic and pathetic at the same time.

Musical associations occurring to us are rarely connected with well-formulated thoughts, but with ideas *in statu nascendi*, with thought embryos or vague images. In order to obtain psychological insight into the processes, it would be necessary to define the emotional situation in which the musical associations emerged and to define those preconscious thought germs and would-be ideas that find their musical collateral expressions in those associations. So far no research in this area has been available. The conditions for experimental investigation of those phenomena are very unfavorable. We have to content ourselves with the report of self-observations, and we welcome any instance of this kind, even when the attention of the observer was not directed to the quest of psychological understanding.

The following paragraphs present not only a remarkable and very illuminating instance of this kind, but also an example of the puzzling phenomenon that a great writer anticipates insights at which psychological research has not yet arrived.

TWO

The greatest Austrian playwright, Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872), is almost unknown in this country. Very few of his works are translated into English, and only a few critics and historians of literature

recognize that he was one of the classical German writers, a not unworthy successor of Goethe and Schiller and a herald of the psychological drama of Hebbel and Ibsen. As far as I know, none of his plays in noble verse has been performed in this country. The material to be used in this chapter is taken from Grillparzer's autobiography, written about one hundred years ago.[1] Almost unknown and certainly unnoticed by psychological research until now, its analytic investigation promises to form an important contribution to the problem of musical associations that occupies our interest.

Grillparzer had already become famous for two plays, *Die Ahnfrau* and *Sappho*, which had frequently been performed on the Austrian and German stage, when he conceived the idea of *The Golden Fleece* which was perhaps his most ambitious plan. The young man, who was an official at the Hofkammer (exchequer), lived at the time in Baden near Vienna, where his mother was taking the baths on advice of her physician. When they arrived in Baden, the young poet, while turning the pages of a lexicon of mythology left behind by a previous tenant of the apartment, ran into an article on Medea. He knew, of course, the story of the Greek mythological figure: how the Colchian sorceress helped Jason to obtain the lustrous golden fleece, how she was married to him and that she later killed their two children in a vengeful rage over his unfaithfulness. The extensive material formed itself into a trilogy in Grillparzer's mind "with the same suddenness as with my previous concepts." He was especially interested in the character of Medea and in the emotions which led her to the atrocious deed.

An illness prevented the poet from working on the play. He went to another health resort, Gastein, where the medicinal springs brought him relief, and started after his return to write *The Golden Fleece*. "Never did I work on anything with so much zest," he reports in his autobiography. His work had progressed beyond the second half of the *Argonauten* and he hoped to finish it soon. "But it was differently decided in Heaven. While I was in Gastein, my mother had been constantly ill. She had reached her forty-eighth year and was at the point where female nature is subjected to a great change. In spite of the help of a very ingenious physician, her disease

[1] The rich biographical literature about Grillparzer (especially H. Sittenberger, *Grillparzer, Sein Leben und Wirken* [Leipzig, 1904]) was considered. I am indebted to Dr. Alfred Farau, New York, for some additional data.

deteriorated from day to day; finally she could not leave her bed any more, yes, there appeared periodically real insanity." The patient demanded to be allowed to get up and go to a communion service in the church, although she had not been religious before. The physician refused his permission. He told Grillparzer that the patient had no fatal illness and could continue to live many years in her present state, "a burden to herself and others." The following night Grillparzer was awakened by the maid and found his mother hanged near her bed. "The terror of this moment can be understood. . . . Only someone who had observed the idyllic nature of our life together could realize what I felt. Since, after her own resources had dried up, I provided for the needs of our household, for her, the son and the husband were united in me. She had no wishes except mine, and it did not occur to me to have a wish that would not have been hers. . . ."

It is meaningful that Grillparzer, after these remarks and in connection with them, explains why he had remained a bachelor: "From our living together I would conclude that a marital relation was not contrary to my nature at all, although such a relationship has not become reality. There is something reconciliatory and indulgent in me that likes to yield to guidance by others, but permanent disturbances and interferences with my thoughts are intolerable to me, and I cannot stand them even if I chose. I would have to be alone in married life, forgetting that my wife was another person. . . . But to be really together with her would be impossible on account of the loneliness of my character. Once such a relationship promised to form itself, but it was disturbed, God knows, without my responsibility."

Grillparzer alludes here to the love relationship with Kathi Fröhlich, who came from a well-known Viennese family, and who had in common with the writer's mother intense musical interests, as well as a nervous temperament. The relationship with her, often disturbed by violent clashes of will, lasted several decades but never led to marriage. There were too many incompatibilities in their characters although they had many common features. When the writer was an old man, sixty-four years old, he lived in the same household with Kathi and her sisters. They slept in adjoining rooms and played chess together. Two shadows embraced each other. Grillparzer died in her arms.

The death of his mother caused a block in the writing of *The Golden Fleece,* and, as before, shortly after the conception of the trilogy, Grillparzer escaped into illness. The "terrible circumstances of the death of my mother," he reports, affected his health to such an extent that his physicians advised him to leave Vienna immediately (March, 1819). After he got leave from the government, he made a journey of several months to Italy. He returned eager to finish the play, which had progressed very far at the time of his mother's suicide. "But a sad change became apparent. Through the shock of my mother's death, the strong impressions on my trip to Italy, my illness there and the unpleasantnesses at my return, all that I had prepared and conceived for my work was entirely effaced. I had forgotten all. Above all, the concept itself, but also all details were covered by total darkness, and the more so as I could never bring myself to jot anything down. . . . While I searched in vain in my memory, something strange happened. During the last years I had often played with my mother the compositions of the great masters, arranged for the piano. While playing the symphonies of Hadyn, Mozart and Beethoven, I had incessantly thought of my *Golden Fleece* and the embryonic ideas of it had become merged with the melodies in one inextricable whole. I had also forgotten this fact, or was at least far away from seeing in it a means of support. Some time before I had made the acquaintance of the writer Caroline Pichler, and continued our friendship. Her daughter was a good piano player, and sometimes after dinner we sat at the instrument and played duets. It now happened that we came upon those symphonies I had played with my mother, and all the ideas that I had half unconsciously put into them at their first playing returned out of them. All of a sudden I knew once more what I wanted, and if I could not regain the precise concept, its outline and development became clear."

Grillparzer began to work again on the play, finished the second part of the trilogy and started to write the third, *Medea.* He wrote the last two acts of this tragedy each in two days.

THREE

Grillparzer's report presents an indirect proof of the characterization and psychological evaluation of musical associations. He had connected the concept of his play with the classical symphonies to

such an extent that the "thought embryos," as he calls them, merged with the themes into one undifferentiated unity. Also this transition phase from vague lines to definite shapes is fraught with emotions. It is not comparable to the blueprint an architect sees and draws, but rather to the outline of a building as seen in a dream, already in that preform of imagination that is close to artistic creation. The psychological difference from the thoughts and images that occur to us average listeners is, of course, considerable with regard to the scope and importance of the fantasy. It is small, if existent at all, with regard to the quality of preconscious, fantastic thought processes we all experience when we listen to those symphonies. Seen from this point of view, Grillparzer's description provides not only an excellent substitute for a result obtained in experiment, but also an appropriately depicted instance of the mental by-products of musical impressions.

Even more psychologically interesting are the disappearance and the recovery of the concept of the tragedy. The concept vanished under the shock of his mother's suicide, was banned from the area of conscious thinking. We would say today it was repressed by the force of thoughts that were felt as intolerable. Psychoanalytic experience, acquired in many hundreds of similar cases by psychiatrists, leads to two conclusions about this process of repression. The first is that the concept of the play must have been unconsciously or preconsciously connected with the memory of his mother. Its plot or its character must have been in associative relation to her personality and to her fate in such a way that the thought of the tragedy led inevitably to memories of her and had therefore to be avoided. We know that the poet was preoccupied with the concept of *The Golden Fleece* when he lived with his mother in Baden and Gastein, and that he daydreamed of it when he played those symphonies with her. These facts would certainly bring her memory into connection with the outline and the details of the dramatic plan, but it is to be assumed that the connection went beyond the region of these external circumstances and was of a much more intimate nature. At this point we have to fill the gaps left in Grillparzer's report with knowledge found in biographical sources of his life at that time and to use it in the sense of psychological circumstantial evidence.[2]

[2] For the biographical material compare especially the article "Grillparzer und die Frauen" by Hans Sittenberger, *Osterreichische Rundschau* (Nov., 1905, and Jan., 1906), Vol. V.

We know that the model for the figure of Medea in Grillparzer's tragedy was the beautiful and temperamental Charlotte Paumgarten. The poet had known Charlotte when she was a young girl without paying much attention to her. After she had married his cousin and friend, Ferdinand Paumgarten, Charlotte no longer concealed that she felt much attracted to the young playwright, whom she saw more frequently and to whose family she now belonged. Grillparzer's diary shows how desperately the easily inflamed writer fought against the passion Charlotte had awakened in him. The affair with her lasted almost two years. Grillparzer suffered from guilt feelings toward his friend and cousin, and vacillated between attraction and repulsion toward Charlotte. His diary proves how often he tried to break off the relationship, and how again and again he yielded to Charlotte's passionate temperament. There were frequent clashes between them, in which the woman expressed her anger and rage at her scrupulous lover whose attempts to free himself of the bond she bitterly resented. The journey to Italy after the death of his mother should have helped to loosen the tie with Charlotte, but the relationship was resumed after Grillparzer's return to Vienna. Finally, in the spring of 1821, he found the energy to renounce Charlotte.

When Grillparzer conceived the tragedy of the *Argonauten*, he had Charlotte in mind as model for that Colchian princess and identified himself unconsciously with the Greek Jason who could not be faithful to the beloved whose passionate temperament he had reasons to fear. There is, of course, no mention of that affair or of his intense emotional conflict in the writer's biography, but all his biographers, at whose disposal his secret diaries are, agree that the relationship with Charlotte was the determining factor in the shaping of Medea's character. But behind the figure of Charlotte Paumgarten stands that of the writer's mother in whose image Medea is created. Mother of three children, and of a high-strung and artistic temperament, she had never taken good care of her household, and her son had inherited from her not only her musical gifts, but also her depressive and hypochondriacal brooding disposition. No doubt, he found again in Charlotte her passionate character. Medea's terrible deed was a result of those overpowering emotional forces, and it is only by the mercy of poetical formation that her figure avoids

the border line of pathology that had become reality in her primal model, in Grillparzer's mother who became insane.

We have to assume in accordance with all analytic experiences that an old unconscious emotional conflict with his mother was transferred to all relationships which the writer had with the women he loved, relationships that always resulted in unhappiness and renunciation. On each relationship fell the shadow of this earlier one, and the affair with Charlotte Paumgarten carried the added burden of an incestuous bond. Her violent nature must have reminded him in attraction and revulsion of familiar traits of his mother. The writer himself says that living with his mother had an idyllic character because she saw in him son and husband united. It is clear from his autobiography, that he idealizes life with Mother, thinking especially of the early years of his manhood. It is not accidental that these memories of her are immediately followed by the already quoted considerations about the emotional impossibility of marriage for himself.

In spite of Grillparzer's emphasis on the "idyllic" nature of life with Mother, we suspect that there had been enough inner friction in the household, especially in those later years when the son longed for independence and his mother almost entirely depended on him. Not only did the financial burden rest on the writer's shoulders, but also that of worry about the mental health of his mother, who deteriorated more and more. We would guess from Grillparzer's description that she suffered from a climacteric form of insanity and that her suicide marked the end of several years of agitation and depression. The son, himself emotionally not very balanced and inclined to suspicious and hypochondriac complaints, had to take singlehanded care of her. His attitude to Mother at this time must have been in a high degree ambivalent.

Our second analytic assumption has its origin in this emotionally charged situation. Grillparzer must have thought or feared that a catastrophe could happen. We heard from him that the physician declared that the woman could still live many years in her present state, "a torture to herself and to others." The young writer must have brooded over that future, and he unconsciously thought or wished it would all be over soon. When he found his mother had hanged herself, there was a split second of unconscious satisfaction, as if this catastrophe made an end to his difficulties and was wel-

come. The shock and intense guilt feelings and remorse following that fleeting emotion banned it into the unconscious and kept it there. The nervous disturbance which made the journey to Italy advisable proves the intensity of the reaction in Grillparzer. The memory which he most anxiously avoided was that of the momentary relief when he found his mother dead. It was at this point that the figure of Medea who appeared half insane in her rage appeared somewhere connected with that of his mother and with Charlotte Paumgarten. Grillparzer tried to get away from all those impressions, not only physically in journeying to Italy, but also mentally in avoiding the thought of his mother in the last years, of her psychotic state and of her end. In banning those thoughts as much as possible from his conscious mind, he also unconsciously avoided in his fantasy the tragedy whose leading figure had so many features in common with his emotionally disturbed mother and with his overtemperamental mistress. He tried to get away from all of them, Mother, Charlotte, Medea, and he succeeded, at least to some extent and for a short time.

FOUR

The continuity of this interpretation would demand a psychological analysis of the process by which the lost concept of *The Golden Fleece* was regained. I would, however, like to interrupt the description at this point in order to show that Grillparzer himself must have been aware that he had a tendency to repress unpleasant thoughts and to keep them from coming up to the conscious level. Not only that; astonishingly enough, he also knew in some way the therapy for the disturbance resulting from this repression and expressed its quintessence in clear words anticipating the insights of psychoanalysis.

In a later part of his autobiography, he mentions that he was in great confusion about the succession of events in his memory. It was again a situation in which conflicts resulting in his love life, wrongs inflicted on him in his office and various hindrances in his creative production brought about a depression from which he again tried to escape by a journey to Germany, where he visited Goethe. The reason why his memory failed him about the succession

of the following events is, he stated, that "I am trying to forget them." Everybody interested in depth psychology will read the following paragraphs, written more than one hundred years before Freud, with admiration for the intuitive understanding of the Austrian writer: "I felt, perhaps somewhat hypochondriacally, so oppressed and fenced in on all sides that I knew no other means of support than to break off the threads of thoughts torturing me and to start in a new direction. This procedure has also brought much harm to me in other ways. It has changed my originally constant character into a somewhat inconsistent one (to express myself in Kantian words), and even my memory, which had been good in my youth, became unreliable and weak by that incessant breaking off and renewed tying together of my thoughts. I would advise everybody who wishes to accomplish something remarkable to follow up unpleasant thoughts until they find a solution in his mind. Nothing in this area is more dangerous than dissipation."

I am almost sure Freud was not familiar with this passage because he certainly would have acknowledged Grillparzer as one of his predecessors in the intuitively gained insight of one of the most important principles on which psychoanalytic therapy is founded. It is strange that the playwright had recognized this basic principle one hundred years before Freud discovered and formulated it in Vienna, within a few minutes' walk from the place where Grillparzer lived.

These excursive remarks have not removed us as far from our course as we feared because the writer's amnesia concerning the concept of the tragedy also showed all the traits of a successful attempt at forgetting everything connected with the suicide of his mother. That includes, of course, the play on which he worked at the time of her illness, but especially its leading figure, Medea, who in her violent passion seemed to move on the verge of insanity herself.

We also find in Grillparzer's description another character trait of behavior: he tried not only to "break off the threads of thought torturing me," but also to start in a new direction. When he returned to Vienna and could not regain the lost concept of *The Golden Fleece,* he searched for an emotional refuge in music. It seems that he had often taken this escape. Many years before, the young poet, then eighteen years old, saw his father seriously ill. Napoleon's army had occupied Vienna, the financial situation of the

family had greatly deteriorated, and Grillparzer foresaw that his father would soon die. The young man searched to escape from his depression. "Poetry was at that time quite remote and, too, would in the pregnancy of thoughts have been a rather inappropriate expression of my feelings that reached for the future. I came to music." In his autobiography, Grillparzer explains that he had forgotten what he had learned as a boy, even notes, and that he began to improvise on the piano. He acquired such a skill that he could play for many hours. "I often put an etching on the music desk and played the scene there presented as if it were a musical composition." This passage is significant in its contrast of the precision of poetic concept with the indefinite emotional expression of music which Grillparzer here emphasized, but it also interests us because it characterizes the nature of musical associations. Those improvisations were purposeful and are different from the musical associations otherwise described, but they are certainly psychologically akin to musical phrases that occur to us in everyday life.

Grillparzer's description of that earlier experience interests us in this context because, then as now, he tried to escape from his somber thoughts into music. This general character does not exclude that an unconscious purpose now led the writer to the playing of Haydn's, Mozart's and Beethoven's symphonies after his vain attempts to remember the lost concept of his play. That unconscious goal was, of course, to regain the memory of it.

But is there not a psychological contradiction in this assumption? Did we not assert that Grillparzer tried to avoid all memories of the time of his mother's illness and suicide, and that he unconsciously avoided the thoughts of *The Golden Fleece* because they were attached to those traumatic memories? And now we assume that he was in search of those memories, that he unconsciously tried to recall that concept, and with it the figure of Mother from whose tragic end he had recoiled in thought. The contradiction is only a seeming one because there were two opposite tendencies in the writer: the one shying away from those painful memories and the other that brought them back to conscious thoughts; there was a centrifugal and a centripetal trend. His emotional attitude at the time of his return from Italy to Vienna was characterized by the conflict and competition of those two tendencies. That blow of destiny had drowned the concept of the play in the unconscious.

But now, a few months later, Grillparzer wishes to tie together again the threads he had torn. The forgotten concept came back to his mind when those recuperating trends became dominant.

It could not have been accidental that the concept re-emerged when Grillparzer again played those classical symphonies. Something in Grillparzer's emotional attitude with regard to the memory of his mother must have been changed in those months during his journey. He began to recover from the blow. The hours he had spent playing those symphonies with Mother had belonged to those "idyllic" times of which he spoke, and were certainly in contrast to the later phase in which she was insane. The memories of playing the symphonies together were of a pleasant and affectionate kind, an expression not only of musical, but also of emotional harmony, not yet disturbed by the painful experience of Mother's psychotic state.

The music of the great masters itself helped in the task of psychotherapy. The emotions of grief and joy, pain and relief, guilt and redemption had been expressed and dissolved in those chords. The emotional conquest was helped by an expression provided by the inner experience those masters had brought into wonderful sounds. Conjured up by the power of those melodies, the forgotten concept of *The Golden Fleece* re-emerged from the shadows and was reawakened to life. With this re-emergence, the emotional task of mourning by which we loosen the ties with our dear dead was approaching its decisive phase, but also the necessary return to active life and creative production was assumed. Where conscious effort to reproduce the concept had failed, the impressions of that other art, so akin to creative writing, had succeeded. The power of music had removed the block of the writer and had cleared the way back to his work.

In the case of Grillparzer, the preconscious and dreamlike thought activity while listening to music had taken the form of artistic creativity. The musical associations had the character of artistic production. The associations we average people connect with music are not of this special kind, but the difference is one of proportion rather than of basic quality. Something of a poet lives in all of us and expresses itself not only in our dreams, but also in the daydreams, fantasies and associations when we listen to music.

In an essay on conducting, the well-known musician Anton Seidl

remarked that the listeners to a Beethoven symphony conducted by Richard Wagner realized "how much there is hidden away among the notes of that classic giant and how much can be conjured out of them." The conductor meant, of course, how much emotion and beauty, hitherto undiscovered, can be brought to the awareness of the audience by a congenial conductor. Grillparzer's experience points in another direction, namely, how much of our own emotions and thoughts we are putting into those symphonies. The playwright has placed the concept of the tragedy into those notes. The concept seemed to be lost, but it was only misplaced and could be found again. We all put much of our hidden thoughts and preconscious emotions into the melodies we hear, and we all would be surprised if we paid more attention to them when they echo in us. Psychological research enables us to discover how much we, too, have "hidden away among the notes" and "how much can be conjured out of them."

FIVE

Grillparzer's mother came from the very musical family, Sonnleithner, who played a not unimportant role in Vienna. As a boy, Grillparzer saw Beethoven for the first time in the house of his uncle Joseph Sonnleithner in 1804. Two years later Grillparzer's parents spent the summer in Heiligenstadt near Beethoven's apartment and often listened to his piano playing. Many years later Beethoven wished that the writer whose *Ahnfrau, Sappho* and *Medea* had made him famous would write a libretto for an opera. As Grillparzer reports, he often visited the great composer and had many conversations with him. Beethoven liked and appreciated Grillparzer and assured him that he worked on the opera. Grillparzer loved the composer. He wrote the beatuiful speech that was spoken at Beethoven's funeral on March 29, 1827. There are a few sentences in it meant for the many thousand Viennese who stood together with Grillparzer at the open grave of the giant: "Because he withdrew from the world, they called him hostile and because he avoided the expression of emotion, feelingless. Alas, he who knows that he is hard does not run away from emotion. Only the finest points become

blunt very easily and bend and break. The excess of emotion avoids emotion."

In the crowd at the funeral a young friend stood near Grillparzer. Tears ran down his cheeks while he listened to those sentences. He was a Viennese composer, not well known and not much appreciated in his native town, but Beethoven, whom he had visited, had said of him that he had the "divine spark." His name was Franz Schubert. One and a half years later they buried him in the Währinger Cemetery at the side of the greatest of composers. Again there were many people at the cemetery because the Viennese are good in providing a *"schöne Leich,"* a beautiful funeral, for the men of genius whom they let starve.

CHAPTER IX

Caprice Viennois

ONE

IN A PSYCHOANALYTIC seminar in which we discussed the selectivity of memory, a student of mine made the acute observation that remembrances of certain places and persons are rarely awakened by the hearing of great music—for instance, of symphonies of Beethoven and Mozart. Much oftener remembrances are connected with compositions of mediocre value or even cheap tunes. Another student remarked that nostalgia is also often produced by familiar tunes one has heard in childhood. It is well known that homesickness is called up by music of this kind, while the compositions of the great masters which we learned to appreciate in later years rarely awaken nostalgic feelings.

The remarks made in that discussion came back to mind the other day when I fell to wondering why I, who have now been in this country since 1938, so rarely and only for a few moments have ever felt homesick. The immediate reason for this astonishment was the comparison of my own emotional attitude with that of a patient whom I had seen that day. The patient is a woman, near forty years old, born and bred in Vienna like myself, who escaped from the Nazis a short time after I arrived in this country. Like myself, she had great difficulties in the readjustment to the new life in the U.S.A., but, with the greater adaptability of a woman, she had succeeded sooner and better than I had, as far as external circumstances were con-

dicate that the meal did not agree with the person.[7] To evaluate this psychological alternative, one has to regress in one's ideas to the most elementary level. The elation, thus considered, would mean that an incorporated object was well digested, and the depression would signify that the incorporation was not very successful. The proof of the incorporated object is in the eating, or rather at some time after it. At the highest level such disagreeing of food would find its emotional correlation in depression or guilt feelings. Following the two possibilities of elation or mania and of depressions, the investigator who has picked up a trail has gone the limit of a working hypothesis, from the earliest phase of primitive incorporation to the last in which all is in the mind.

The preceding theory was no more than an attempt to make understandable to myself the lack of aggressiveness, cruelty, malice and grudge in obese or overweight persons. It was freely admitted that the hypothesis at which I arrived had not matured enough to be validated or voided. It had scarcely progressed beyond the phase of conjectures and suggestions and had not jelled enough to deserve the name of an analytic theory, merely that of an outset of theoretical reflections.

I do not share with my fellow psychoanalysts the worship of science, and I do not kneel down before science which has been enthroned in the place left by God in the modern world. A respectful how to scientific research is, to my way of thinking, enough. This lack of awe might explain, but perhaps not excuse, why I did not pursue the theoretical possibilities sketched before nor test and reexamine them by verification. I left the idea in suspense. It was at this point not a conscious decision, but a kind of indifference that left the future of the budding thought to destiny. I could have tossed a coin: heads I stick, tails I quit. Instead of trying that popular modern oracle, I let my thoughts wander into some sort of scientific daydreaming.

The continuation of Kretzschmer's thesis took its point of departure from observations of clinical cases. It moved from there to psychological assumptions and logical conclusions near the point where it should be formed and formulated into a scientific theory.

[7] These tentative psychoanalytic assumptions were jotted down long before Bertram Lewin's book *The Psychoanalysis of Elation* was published (New York, 1950). Dr. Lewin's interesting contribution does not mention Kretzschmer.

Before it was crystallized, my attention was deflected and turned in a new direction. The process may well be compared to walking to a certain goal. On his way the wanderer becomes interested in something on a bypath and turns his attention to this new impression, forgetting for the moment his original goal. One is not always master of one's interests. Sometimes one does well in following one's inner voice rather than one's considered intentions. The destination that we had in mind can be quite remote from the place to which destiny sends us.

SIX

In the second part of his scientific work, Kretzschmer occasionally refers to proverbs and sayings of the people who seem to have anticipated some of his typological findings and who bring body build and character into intimate connection. He could have quoted many more and have added the sentences of writers who some centuries before his book confirm his opinions.[8] There is, however, one greater authority he quotes. Shakespeare, speaking with the voice of Julius Caesar:

> Let me have men about me that are fat;
> Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights;
> Yond' Cassius has a lean and hungry look;

In spite of what Antony has to say in praise of that Roman noble, Caesar remains unconvinced:

> Would he were fatter!
> . . . He loves no plays
> As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
> Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
> As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit,
> That could be moved by smile at anything

[8] For instance, the title of the tract *Laugh And Be Fat* by John Taylor (1580-1625), or the view expressed by Washington Irving: "Who ever hears of fat men heading a riot or herding together in turbulent mobs?—no—no, 'tis your lean, hungry men who are continually worrying society . . ." (*Knickerbocker's History of New York*, Book III, Chap. 2).

Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.

While following Kretzschmer's typological considerations with great attention, I had been thinking coherently and rationally, but at this point my mind slipped away to all kinds of random thoughts. I can only guess that it was the memory of my patient Jack whom I had seen the day before that led my thoughts to the subject of vengeance in connection with Shakespeare's figures. Jack had again uttered wild curses against his boss and had sworn bloody revenge, which, I knew, he would never take. In contrast to him, the figure of Shylock and his terrible revengefulness came to mind. I imagined the Jew of Venice, a thin, sharp-featured older man, full of nervous energy and aggressiveness, a distinct schizoid-paranoid type. There is no superfluous flesh on his body, and his mind does not know a moment of leisure. The similes and terms he uses with regard to that bond are not accidentally taken from the area of food: "I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him." The question of what good a pound of flesh would do him is answered in the same vein: "To bait fish withal. If it feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge." Shylock is starving in this voracious hunger of vengeance and he does not allow himself much food. The sentence Heinrich Heine once wrote about an antagonist could be applied to Shylock: "He would not be as biting if he had more to bite." His sarcasm is bloody and its effects correspond to the sense of the Greek word which means tearing the flesh to pieces. His insistence on that pound of flesh from Antonio's body is a substitute for a cannibal craving. He seems to be a personification of that second sadistic, cannibal phase of orality as it is sketched in Karl Abraham's psychoanalytic theory.

Still under the impression of that clinical picture of my patient Jack, my random associations now glide to the figure of the Danish prince with whom he shares the incapability of taking revenge. Like Jack, he has the "motive and the cue for passion" and he, too,

must, like a trull, unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!

Hamlet's aggressiveness exhausts itself in curses, abuses and self-complaints. In the sense of Kretzschmer's theory he presents a mixed type of schizoid and cycloid temperament. His body build is described by the Queen: "He's fat and scant of breath." There are, however, many characterological features that point in the direction of a schizoid personality.

While my thoughts wander to other Shakespearean characters, to Othello, Iago, Richard and Macbeth, a figure emerges in my associations, so voluminous and bulky that there is no place for others beside him: Sir John Falstaff. As in those sacred halls of the *Magic Flute,* vengeance is unknown in the Boar's Head Tavern of Eastcheap. Sir John is not revengeful and he does not understand how others could be. Poins warns the irritated prince that Falstaff had spoken vilely of him before Doll: "My lord, he will drive you out of your revenge and turn all to merriment."

In omitting his figure, Kretzschmer has renounced the most representative example of the cycloid type as far as body build and temperament are concerned. Sir John is not just obese. He is obesity personified. He is sociable and jolly, full of zest of life and good humor. He has distinct features of oscillating between manic and depressive moods. There are sudden changes from an uninhibited *joie de vivre* to gloominess, from elation to a melancholic attitude. The greatest comical figure of world literature has conspicuous moments of sadness and expectancy of doom. He sighs, " 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear," and confesses that he is now "little better than one of the wicked." He is ready to repent and reform, but in the next moment he is very willing to rob some travelers. The prince sees "a good amendment" in him "from praying to purse-taking." The knight himself brings his fatness in causal connection with his sadness: "A plague of sighing and grief. It blows a man up like a bladder." Is it not strange that Shakespeare, four hundred and fifty years before the analytic investigation of obesity, gives here an etiological explanation for the emotional genesis of overweight? Kretzschmer, who mentions the German expression *Kummer speck* (= grief-belly) in the context of his typology, has deprived himself of that classical explanation.[9] There is even, comparable to the second clinical case described, a hypochon-

[9] So has Dr. B. Lewin, who does not mention Falstaff in his *Psychoanalysis of Elation.*

driacal fear in Falstaff that he might fall off in flesh, and, as in that case, the fear is clearly connected with guilt feelings and expectancy of impending personal calamity: "Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? do I not bate? do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown; I am withered like an old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking; I shall be out of heart shortly and then I shall have no strength to repent."

No doubt, that incomparable creation of a writer's imagination anticipated the scientific description of the cycloid character. More than this, we psychologists will have trouble catching up with it. Kretzschmer emphasizes, it is true, that the cycloid personality is generally earth-bound, realistic in contrast to the idealistic and sometimes fanatic and fantastic, eccentric and lofty features of the schizoid type. Is there a better example of those traits than that pet-mountain of a man? This full-grown and full-blown old man has kept the gaiety of a little boy, but also his sense of realism. He is not in awe of conventions, and the so-called sacred ideas do not impress him. He walks over them and laughs them off. He steals the show as he does any purse within his reach. He is amoral, a liar, a coward, a glutton and a buffoon, a cheater, a reprobate and invincible and irresistible in his charm and freedom, gained in humor. He sees through all make-believe and considers discretion the better part of valor. The self-protection and the absolutely realistic outlook, characteristic of the extreme cycloid temperaments, makes him "a coward on instinct" while he is "as valiant as Hercules." His creed on honor will survive all the codes of nature. "Give me life!" cries Falstaff on the battlefield of Shrewsbury. The fear of death, so remote to the schizoid type, drives him to stuff himself with food.

He enjoys everything, but before all himself. This huge mass of flesh, this ton of a man will never "leave gormandizing," as the new king admonishes him. When we first meet Falstaff, he asks what time it is, and Prince Hal says: "Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack, and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons." Sir John is not only fun-loving, but funny, not only witty, but also the cause for other people's wit. He does not think too much, he is fat and sleeps well, loves play and music. Caesar would not have considered him dangerous but would have wished to have him around.

The old rogue shouts a lot, but he barks rather than bites. He can abuse and curse as well as the next man. As well? No, much better. He is a genius at abusive comparisons and vile language, and has no par in the invention of invectives. But he is not sarcastic in his aggressiveness. He prefers biting into meat and fowl to making biting remarks on people. He lives on a minimum of activity if it is possible, and he is hurrying only to the set table, is not eager to arrive anywhere except to come and get it. He loves company and company loves him. He knows that he is loved and expresses the general liking people have for obese persons: "If to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved." He is the life of the party because he is the party of life.

SEVEN

We speak of fleeting thoughts, of the flash of an idea, but we have really no appropriate expression for the rapid speed with which thoughts cross time and space. In a split second I searched the little I know of world literature for obese and distinct cycloid personalities to be compared in some way or other to plump Jack, to the immortal figure of Sir John Falstaff. The express train of associations rushed from the stocky figure of the squire Sancho Panza, representing common sense, earthiness and flexibility in contrast to the rigid insanity of his master, to the corpulent Nero Wolfe, the almost immobile gourmand and gourmet of Manhattan.

I heard my thoughts, so to speak, racing through the centuries of writing, but then I suddenly heard something very different. The *Rosenkavalier* waltz danced through my mind. The ¾ measures moved in casually and with sovereign indifference for the serious nature of the preceding associations, just as if they felt entirely at home in this intellectual environment. I had left the domain of purely theoretical reflections, it is true, but I was still searching for cycloid figures in world literature.

What business had that waltz in that sphere? To use a comparison, it was as if the secretary of a trust company were called to the con-

ference of the board of directors, and in her place appeared a ballerina in short skirts at the door of the conference room. I certainly had not called that abounding waltz. At this moment it was completely uncalled for, but I did not dismiss it immediately. It is psychologically interesting that sometimes we treat musical associations occurring to us in the middle of intellectual work differently than others. They are not violently ejected, but rather politely dismissed. We bow to them when we accompany them to the door of conscious thoughts, almost with regret that they appear at an inappropriate moment. And sometimes we welcome them although they come unannounced. Many men have stopped thinking of the brief they were working on and listened for a few moments to a barrel organ that played *Tea for Two* on the street. This by way of apology because I let the *Rosenkavalier* waltz dance through my serious thinking.

But then I began to ponder why it reappeared. What have those tuneful ¾ measures to do with Sir John of whom I had thought before? I had been in the England of virginal Elizabeth in my ideas and not in Vienna at the time of that other great queen, Maria Theresia. If the association had at least been the picture of the fat rogue as Edward Elgar painted it in the gargantuan boastfulness of his symphonic poem, the overture to the *Merry Wives of Windsor* by Nicolai, a composition I heard so many times, or the opera *Falstaff* by Verdi!

Only a few days ago I had listened to the abundant flow of melody of that late work on the radio and had admired the vigor and the serenity of the old master. But the *Rosenkavalier* waltz? I thought of the first performance I heard of the opera in Vienna in 1911, and I saw in my mind's eye the corpulent figure of the bass singer, Richard Mayr, who always had the part of Ochs von Lerchenau in the Vienna Opera: the image of the aristocrat at the level of the marschallin, then making a pass at her maid who is young Octavian in disguise, the great scene of the tête-à-tête with the maid in that *chambre separée*. Poor Ochs von Lerchenau becomes the victim of an intrigue, as does Sir John in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. He is frustrated like the fat knight. The duel scene in which Ochs is afraid to die from a harmless wound and the battle scene from which Sir John escapes with the cry "Give me life!" And again that tender waltz, as background music to the images called up by the memory of that first performance.

Of course, that's it. I had thought of successors of Sir John in world literature, found none worthy of walking in his bulky shadow, and then in a long distance from that miraculous creation appeared Ochs von Lerchenau with his belly. There are so many differences between the two figures! Yet the coarse Lerchenau is a Viennese miniature edition of the knight with whom he shares the zest of life and an indomitable self-love. He is a weaker great-grandson of the British character, and in spite of all divergencies a certain family resemblance is unmistakable.

The emergence of the *Rosenkavalier* waltz made the impression of a hopscotch idea, but now it makes some sense. The line of thought, stimulated by Kretzschmer's characterological description of the cycloid type, went from that huge mass of flesh in the person of Sir John to the corpulent figure of the Austrian aristocrat, from the Boar's Head Tavern to a chamber in Vienna. Really there was a direct line from Falstaff in that Eastcheap tavern to Ochs von Lerchenau in a dubious restaurant in Vienna.

The surprising emergence of the waltz was only partly explained by the remote resemblance of the two corpulent men and of the situations in which they became the victims of an amorous intrigue. Force of psychological habit made me search for other connecting links between my associations. These links were few and far between: the characterological features of the obese cycloid type, the zest for life, the congenital optimism, the narcissistic self-love . . . Kretzschmer's careful description . . . my search for figures in world literature who resemble in body build and temperament that walking human barrel Sir John. . . .

But why the waltz? . . Another waltz by another Strauss occurs to me . . . *Wine, Women and Song*. Perhaps that's it . . . Sir John enjoys his liquor, of course . . . and so does Ochs von Lerchenau. (Here is again that waltz . . . the dinner-scene . . . Octavian Mariandl sings, *"Nein, nein, nein, nien, ich mag kan Wein. . . ."*) But that other fat man, Nero Wolfe, drinks beer, many bottles daily. . . . It can't be the wine. . . . Besides that, overweight people become obese rather by excessive intake of food.

And women? . . . Yes, Falstaff is eager for amorous adventures with three women at Windsor, and Ochs wants to seduce the chambermaid of the marschallin. . . . But again Nero Wolfe. . . . He is not very fond of women. . . . Let me corroborate the circumstantial

evidence of that associative link. . . . Does not the prince express his astonishment that, in Falstaff's case, the desire survives the performance so long? . . . The fat knight pretends that he is a great ladies' man—he is not very discriminating and they are rarely ladies—but is he really? He seems more attracted to the company of men. . . . There is Prince Hal, Pistol and Bardolph. . . . Sir John Falstaff has a distinct trend of latent homosexuality that is unconsciously denied. . . . His love for the young prince has almost a maternal character, and its expression is sometimes pathetic. . . . One of his sentences concerning his young friend comes to mind: "If the rascal have not given me medicine to make me love him, I'll be banged." . . . And Ochs von Lerchenau? It must have a secret meaning that the pretty girl to whom he makes propositions is really a young man in disguise. . . . He makes love to a male. . . . The third fat man, Nero Wolfe, takes a vicarious pleasure in the seducing facilities of his assistant, Archie Goodwin, and his relationship to him is characterized by a kind of contemptuous and protective affection. The relationship of that fresh young man to his rotund boss is almost the same, although mixed with much admiration for the old man.

Strange it is that I did not think along those lines, but it now seems to me that these three obese men show a homosexual inclination for their young companions. . . . And those young men, in turn, tease them, take them in, but admire them, nevertheless. . . . Should I have accidentally run into another characteristic trait of obese persons, not mentioned in Kretzschmer's book or in other literature known to me? . . . Is there an unconscious, patronizing, almost maternal affection for younger members of the same sex, a secret and denied homosexual trend for son- or daughter-representatives?

EIGHT

Wine, Women and Song. . . . I don't remember anything about Nero Wolfe's relationship to music, but Sir John is certainly fond of it. He declares to the Chief Justice that he lost his voice in hallooing and singing anthems. (He does not mention earthy and bawdy songs.) And Ochs von Lerchenau . . . but he loves music, of course.

I just had an idea, but it faded away. It evaporated without any

trace. We say that a man is lost in thoughts. Can thoughts be lost in a man? I have to find that idea that vanished. Where can I search for it? It must be hiding itself behind those other associations. I started from the question as to why the *Rosenkavalier* waltz occurred to me rather than any other tune; or, otherwise put, from the problem of selectivity of musical remembrances and associations. The figure of Falstaff should have suggested the emergence of Nicolai's overture to *The Merry Wives of Windsor* or some melody from Verdi's opera. But those compositions are centering on the figure of Falstaff, and I was roaming through world literature searching for comparable characters. Then the *Rosenkavalier* waltz emerged. Of course, it strikes nearer home than the music of Nicolai and Verdi. Home meaning Vienna. And Ochs von Lerchenau is really a distant relative of Falstaff.

But why should a musical association appear instead of a sober, rational thought, why a tune at all? . . . Wine, women and song . . . Oh, song and the obese cycloid type and temperament. . . . By God, that is it! Did I not at the beginning think of Caesar's characterization of Cassius: "he hears no music"? This thought, the comparison of the lean, schizoid, unsmiling and scheming type, in contrast to the other (Falstaff, Ochs von Lerchenau), must have lingered on without my being aware of it. Those obese, cycloid personalities hear music and love it. The memory of the *Rosenkavalier* waltz is also determined by that unrecognized, subterranean idea: by the contrast of the music-loving, sociable, jolly and obese person with the other, represented by Cassius, the man who hath no music in himself and is, in Shakespeare's sense, so capable of treachery. Instead of the logical and reasoned thought that one of the features of the obese cycloid type is love of music—not mentioned by Kretzschmer—the *Rosenkavalier* waltz suddenly danced into my mind, so to speak, as a musical illustration of that idea. At the same time, the tune represented the appearance of that other rotund cycloid character, Ochs von Lerchenau, a Viennese chip of that old, big block, Sir Falstaff. As I later discovered, the characterological resemblance between Sir John Falstaff and the Baron von Lerchenau had been recognized by the composer and the librettist of the *Rosenkavalier.* In their correspondence, published in 1926, Strauss reminds Hofmannsthal of the beautiful monologue of Falstaff in Verdi's opera and adds: "I imagine the scene of the baron after Octavian's departure should be similar"

[August 12, 1909]. Hofmannsthal claims that a certain actor, considered for the part of Ochs von Lerchenau, does not have "just the most essential features" of the character, namely, "the buffoonish, the Falstaffian, the easygoing, the laughter-awakening" [January 2, 1911]. In the emergence of that waltz, a condensation of thoughts had come to a musical expression whose meaning I had not recognized.

While I am still wondering about the layer structure of those thoughts, which unconsciously continued the Shakespearean contrast of the man who loves music and the other who does not hear it, I am returning to the problem that had originally caught my interest —namely, to the question of what happens to the cruel, sadistic and vicious drives of obese persons. I had found no conclusive solution of the problem, only suggestions and conjectures, all concerning the primitive orality of this type. It seems to me now, that the love of music, which I now found as an overlooked characterological feature, also belongs to this instinctual area. What is music other than sound, originally made by the mouth, sound or scream that has become song? We speak of the magic of music, of its soothing power. Perhaps musical expression sublimates and masters our violent drives and has the magic force to defend us against the evil dangers within ourselves, as it originally banned the menace from without us.[10] By that process of transformation from a wild scream, which expressed primitive aggression, to a melody, the violence was mitigated and another oral gratification obtained. Did Bruno Walter, who wields the pen as masterfully as the baton, intuitively reach this insight, when in his book he asserted that music is unable to express the evil, to communicate the vicious and cruel, sadistic drives that live in all of us?[11] In the analytic sense, the magic of music would be mainly of the nature of an emotional defense against the power of aggressive drives.

The emergence of the *Rosenkavalier* waltz indicated the surprising

[10] The suggestions here contained have, since this paper was written, found a psychoanalytic foundation and confirmation in the penetrating article, "Contribution to Psychoanalysis of Music" by Heinrich Racker (The *American Imago* [June, 1951], Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 129 f.). The magical function of music was, before that article, analytically investigated by Sigmund Pfeifer, "Musik-psychologische Problems" (*Imago*, IX, [1923], No. 4, pp. 453-62), Richard Sterba "Toward the Problem of the Musical Process" (The *Psychoanalytic Review*, 33, No. 1 [January, 1946], pp. 33-43), and by this writer, "The Shofer" (in my book *Das Ritual* [Vienna, 1919]).

[11] *Von den moralischen Kräften der Musik* (Vienna, 1935).

arrival of an unconscious thought that contributes another characterological feature to the analytic theory on obesity. The love of music is another expression of oral activity and gratification of the cycloid type. That neglected idea lingered on and has exerted a remote control on the train of my thoughts. They had consciously aimed at the solution of a problem, but they arrived, invisibly directed to their goal when they were not any longer endeavoring to reach it by way of rational conclusions. The carefully aimed bullet went astray, and the shot in the dark hit near the target. The facts, ascertained and verified by scientific research, and the fancy of the great writers in the form of intuitive insights seemed to coincide with the views of the people in a consensus about the love of music and the relative lack of aggressiveness and viciousness in the character of obese persons.

While I am writing these final sentences, two lines, heard as a child in grammar school, spring up as from a trap door. They seem to confirm Shakespeare's views and the results of modern psychological research:

Wo man singt, da lass dich ruhig nieder,
Böse Menschen haben keine Lieder.

With people who sing you will get along,
Evil men don't have any song.

CHAPTER XI

Point and Counterpoint

ONE

THE FACT THAT the greatest part of the material here presented is self-observed has definite disadvantages. The most serious one is that quite a few phenomena deserving of psychological attention and investigation are neglected because they were not within the range and reach of my observation. It is gratifying that at least one type of musical association not familiar to me was brought to my attention by a friend who could also contribute a few interesting examples. This is the emergence of two or more tunes of different character, the one often the opposite of the other, in quick succession. They compete for the attention of the person, each demanding priority in his thoughts. They often occur in this contest side by side until they appear intertwined and sometimes blended.

All of us find that certain tunes are followed by another in our thoughts, although this happens only rarely under ordinary circumstances. When you return from the performance of an operetta, it is not unusual that you hum the one and the other melody that has caught your fancy. It is also likely that you remember them, one after the other, a few weeks after the performance. But we exclude this or similar cases in this discussion because we are concerned with situations in which one's attention is not directed to music and in which musical themes intrude in thoughts that had other goals. Even

in those situations the intruding tune can be replaced by another, in the same manner as a line of poetry by another of a similar meaning. It is, however, infrequently that such a tune, when it occurs, is followed by one that has an entirely different emotional character or expresses an opposite kind of mood or thought. Let us, for instance, assume that a man preparing his budget is worried about the deflation of the dollar which threatens to lower the standard of his living. It might well be that he catches himself humming *The Star-Spangled Banner*—perhaps as an expression of his patriotic feeling or of his faith in Uncle Sam. But it would be surprising if he sang in the next minute, let us say, the *Valse triste* by Ravel or a passage from Bruckner's Fourth Symphony. Such a succession is certainly conspicuous, and it would be even more unlikely and truly remarkable if a few seconds later the man should hear in himself a melody in which the tune of the National Anthem is interlocked with that of the Bruckner symphony, especially if they appeared not in the form of a sequence, but in that of one musical piece. Instances of a similar kind were reported to me by my friend Fritz L., who asserted that he often experienced such successions of "mighty opposites" in the musical associations occurring to him in everyday life. Psychologists meet but rarely with this kind of association, except among musicians, who form a group for themselves and whose trains of thoughts are influenced and determined by artistic or technical factors. Fritz is not a musician, but a chemist and, although he loves music, he has no special interest in this art. He sometimes plays on the piano, but I am told that his reading is not good and his technique mediocre.

TWO

Since my impression or, if you prefer, my preconceived idea is that such multiple musical associations, the succession of contrasting tunes and their intertwining, express distinct emotional features, a few personal facts about Fritz seem necessary. He is almost of the same age as myself, born and bred in Vienna in a similar social environment. As a student, he lived a few years in Paris, but he spent most of his life in Vienna until he came to the U.S. about the same time as myself, also in flight from Hitler. In contrast to me, he still has a youthful appearance and an artistic temperament, is witty and

imaginative, has a logical, if sometimes paradoxical mind and an astonishing abundance of ideas. We have known each other more than forty years, and our relationship is founded on that odd mixture of affection, respect and dislike that is a solid basis of friendship. There are not many secrets we have from each other, and while we sometimes avoid speaking of certain subjects, there are others, equally if not more delicate, we freely discuss.

Fritz married when he was very young, but he was only faithful to his wife for a short time. He had several affairs in Vienna, mostly with married women whose husbands were tolerant or otherwhere interested and were always on very friendly terms with Fritz. Arthur Schnitzler, who knew Fritz, perhaps had him in mind when he let Mr. von Sala, in the play *The Lonely Road*, say: "I, too, think that family life is something very nice. But it should at least be in one's own family." In America, Fritz has a love relationship with a beautiful woman almost twenty years younger than he. Dorothea (he calls her Thea, which is not only an abbreviation of her name, but also the Greek word for goddess) genuinely seems to care for him. He has told me several times that Thea's company has an encouraging and rejuvenating effect upon him. "Fancy that!" he once said. "I am an old man and I don't look exactly like the answer to a maiden's prayer. I am not a good conversationalist either, because I lack the gift of quick repartee. *Entre nous*, I am really dull. Don't contradict me because I know that I am almost as dull as you. Do you remember what the Viennese women used to say? 'We women are aging only externally, but you men age internally.' And is it not true? Women keep their human interests alive when they become old. They remain optimistic and are still full of the zest of living. But we men become stony fellows, imprisoned somewhere in the routine of our professions and of our habits. Our mental horizons shrink more and more, and we shut ourselves off from new interests and impressions. When we are old, we are simply intolerable prigs. Fancy that! Thea is really devoted to me, an old guy." He spoke in glowing terms of Thea's charm and femininity and called himself a "lucky dog."

"You are certainly happy with her," I remarked.

"Happy? Yes, of course. That means as far as a man approaching his middle sixties can be happy. You know what Louis Quatorze once said? *'On n'est plus heureux après soixante années.'* " Fritz then spoke of love in young years and in old age, especially with regard to

sexuality, and stated that sexual power is wasted on the young ones who cannot appreciate its glory. As so often, he took the Creator to task, calling him a dilettante of poor talent, whose work he characterized as sadly unfinished business.

Fritz did not doubt that he was in love with Thea. The doubt he had concerned the nature of love itself. He had a theory on love, as on most human relations. He considered love as much an illusion as everything else in this transitory existence, but he made a sharp distinction between necessary and superfluous, indispensable and luxurious illusions. He agreed, for instance, with Freud's opinion that religion, which once played an important and beneficial role in the early education of mankind, is an illusion which outlived its social function long ago and should be withdrawn from civilization. He thought it necessary to take one's work seriously, although the value we attribute to it is sheer illusion. In some moods he foresaw that the illusion of love would become an expensive luxury and would disappear from the face of the earth, in others he included it in the small number of indispensable illusions of civilized men and women. He vividly contradicted me when I remarked that his concept of love as an illusion might diminish its subjective value. He explained to me that there are harmful and useful illusions, which we have to treat according to their nature. "You are quite wrong, Theodor!" he roared (his conversation was often punctuated with quick movements of his arms). "Quite wrong. The only consequence of the clear recognition of love as an illusion is, at least to me, that one has to take permanent care of it. One has to attend to it, to nourish and cultivate it, like a delicate and precious flower. One knows that it has a restricted life expectancy and it is bound to fade and to perish. But so has youth, for instance. Would you assert that you were therefore unwilling to enjoy it? And what about life itself? Have you to commit suicide because death is inevitable and you hear its step behind you all the time? . . . Oh no, you have to take excellent care of the illusion of love. That is the only way to give it a new lease on its short life."

It is in this vein that Fritz frequently argues with me, and more often with himself. He is sometimes verbose and takes a considerable time to come to the point, or rather points, because he has always several. He permanently vacillates between extremes and searches for what he calls a *coincidentia oppositorum*, which Latin expression

he has borrowed from the medieval philosopher Nikolaus von Cusa. From his work in the laboratory he has transferred the habit of putting objects under a microscope to the examination of human institutions and relations. From time to time he pushes the microscope away because its use prevents him from enjoying life. He is a disillusioned hedonist, but with the clear recognition that one cannot live without illusions. I once heard him quote a French phrase proclaiming that in order to have pleasure in life, one must not look at it from a near distance (*"Pour rendre agréable la vie, n'y regardons pas de trop près"*). Yet, he likes to look at the head and tail side of the coin, and his mental vacillations are sometimes so quick that they make me dizzy. He prefers "fooling" with ideas to dealing with them. He is genuine in his emotional expressions and, at the same time, a ham actor, a cynical sentimentalist or a sentimental cynic, I don't know which. As in Faust, as in all of us, there are two souls in him, but he is always too aware of that dichotomy and is, in contrast to most of us, gifted at allowing the two souls to express themselves, one after the other, and occasionally together. It seems to me that these features of his character, his particular emotional attitude and his way of thinking, also reflect themselves in the special kind of musical associations he reported to me.

THREE

I remember when I first mentioned to Fritz my interest in the psychological significance of musical associations. I asked him how he would translate some line from an old song, familiar to both of us, which I wished to quote in the chapter "Caprice Viennois" of this book. The literal translation of that line, *"Der Himmel hängt voller Geigen,"* makes no sense in English ("Heaven is hung with many violins"). Fritz explained the line to Thea and asked for her suggestions. She, too, considered the literal translation impossible and suggested such paraphrases as, "The air is filled with tunes of violins," or, "The sky is full of tunes, played by fiddles." In the continuation of that conversation, I tried to present to both of them an outline of my concept of the psychological significance of musical ideas. Thea did not say much, but Fritz advised me to drop the research project, pointing out that the subject would better be left to a musician who was a trained psychologist or to a psychologist

who was a trained musician. In terms less than complimentary, he expressed his doubts that I really understand music or even had sound notions of its three elements—melody, harmony and rhythm. I sincerely and regretfully agreed with him, but told him that a writer does not "choose" his subject and that emotional, mostly unconscious factors determine the theme he deals with. I freely admitted that I was poorly equipped to treat music as acoustic phenomenon or artistic creation, but that the problem of musical associations has interested me for a long time and some unknown motives propelled me to pursue it. I quoted in this sense Milton's line: "Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie. . . ."

After Thea left us, Fritz returned to the subject of our discussion and tried to show me that my theory was full of holes. "I'll give you an instance," he said. "The other day Thea and I had a tiff. Nothing out of the ordinary, short and violent, at least on her side. She called me selfish and inconsiderate. Well, afterwards I went over to the laboratory to continue some experiment. I felt blue, of course. While I worked, some tune occurred to me which I later recognized as Schumann's lied *'Ich grolle nicht, auch wenn das Herz mir bricht'* ('I bear no grudge even when my heart breaks'). So far so good. I hummed that melody and then I burned my finger on an old Bunsen burner. While I took care of the skin, another tune occurred to me. You know, one of the song hits, a cheap, trashy tune. 'I always get the neck of the chicken,' and then something like he always gets the seat behind the column in the theater, and so on. I don't remember it, only the last line: 'How was it possible that I got you?' You will admit that the sequence is not very logical. Nor psychological, as far as I can see. It is just accidental or, if you like, incidental music."

There was no sense in explaining the obvious to him as long as he remained in his negativistic attitude. Thus, I asked him to pay attention to other musical thoughts occurring to him in different moods. When we met again he mentioned that he had been invited to dinner at the home of the Adelsbergs, a young couple we both know. They had come back from a trip to Europe and brought home some new records from Vienna. "After dinner we listened to them," Fritz reported. "There are quite a few that are really remarkable, a performance of the Vienna Opera, and some symphonies played by the dear old Philharmonic Orchestra. There is still nothing in

the world comparable to the sound of those violins. Yes, it remains Vienna in spite of all. . . . You know, the Adelsbergs met Alma Mahler there, and she told them the following story: She once went with some people to a night club, just one of those restaurants where they dance to the music of a small orchestra. Alma had not been in Vienna since she left for America when Hitler came. Yet somebody in that night club must have recognized her after so many years, because the four or five musicians there interrupted their dance tunes and played the Andante of Mahler's Second Symphony. Can you imagine such a thing happening anywhere but in Vienna? Do you think it would be possible in the Stork Club in New York or in the Trocadero in Paris that the musicians of a dance orchestra would pay such respects to the widow of a composer? Oh, Wien! . . . But what did I want to tell you? Oh yes, there are some new records, published by the Haydn Society. Do you know the Mass of Mariazell? . . . *Missa Cellensis* in C Major, composed exactly two hundred years ago. I thought of you while I listened to it at the Adelsbergs'. You remember the excursion we made to Mariazell as students, don't you?" I remembered, of course, that we had wandered from Salzburg to the little town of Mariazell. I remembered also that we visited the church there and the special chapel in which a miracle-working image of the Virgin was worshiped by many hundreds of pilgrims.

"Oh yes," continued Fritz, "I also thought of you in another connection, of your interest in musical associations. Say, that theory of yours! You are really not as stupid as I assumed. It would be catastrophic too." He paid no attention to my announcement that I would punch his nose one of these days, hut assured me that there is more to my "theory," as he called it, than he had given me credit for. "I made a little self-observation after my visit at the Adelsbergs'. Before falling asleep, I reviewed the evening. It was a sort of revival of Vienna *Gemütlichkeit*. A few bars of that Haydn Mass come to my mind. They are quite delightful. You have to hear the record, really. Old Papa Haydn had the beauty and the vigor together with the baroque grandeur. . . . Well, I hummed those wonderful bars. You will never guess what the tune was that interfered with the solemn chords of the Mass. Something I had not heard since childhood in the synagogue. A bit of Hebrew liturgic music! Of all things, it was that old melody of *'Sch'ma Jisroel, adonai elauhenu, adonai*

echod.' How do you explain such a sequence, according to your theory?"

"Are you sure that there is no resemblance between the two melodies?" I asked.

"Don't be funny! I know, of course, that there are resemblances between some early church choirs and old Hebrew melodies, but I assure you that there is nothing there." I had never before observed that Fritz paid any attention to the religion of his fathers. When he spoke of it, it was always casually. People laughingly quoted his sentence: "Of all Jewish holidays, I observe only the Jascha Heifetz concertos."

I admitted that the succession of the two tunes, so unlike each other and so heterogeneous in their character, made a strange impression. If I should venture a guess, it would be that hearing the Credo of the Mass had stimulated in him the memory of that Hebrew sentence: "Hear, Jisroel, the Lord is our God, the Lord the only one," which was the creed of the Jewish tribes. Fritz remembered that some such idea had already vaguely occurred to him, namely, the thought of the Catholic creed while he listened to the Mass. Did the "formula"—he used this expression, familiar to him as a chemist—not begin with the confession of belief in God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit? He had always felt a rationalistic reluctance against that "formula" proclaiming a divine trinity that is a unity, against that mystery that appeared as an absurdity to him. It was, he admitted, possible that the melody of *Sch'ma Jisroel* had occurred to him as a contrast with and as protest to the missal text. The old monotheistic belief in Jahweh was perhaps at least more logical than the new faith that replaced Him. One has, of course, no right to confuse the devotional and the artistic purpose of the Mass whose music he had very much enjoyed.

Stranger than the fact that the two melodies succeeded one another was that they later on appeared interlocked in his thoughts. How about that? "That could have several meanings," I said. "One has to consider that music is restricted by its material in expressing ideas or emotions." I compared the means at the disposal of music with those of the dream, whose visual character determines that opinions and logical relations can be presented only in that language. The dream expresses, for instance, a comparison or an alternative by a mixture of figures and situations.

"You mean by a kind of a compound?" said Fritz. "The intertwining and blending of the two melodies would amount to the opinion that both creeds are equally absurd, is that it? Well, that is what I really think. You remember what Heinrich Heine said on the subject in his *Disputation*? The last line, I mean." Heine presents in that ballad a vivid and witty description of one of the famous discussions that were held in old Spain, in this case a disputation in the presence of the Castilian King Pedro the Cruel (1350-1368) and his wife Doña Blanca. At that theological forum an eminent Catholic priest and a rabbi tried to convince each other with an abundance of scholarly arguments that his faith was the only true one and the other's a pitiful mistake. At the end of the long theological disputation the King asked his noble wife for her opinion. The Queen, who had listened for many hours to the heated arguments of the two clergymen, heavily perspiring in their religious zeal, declared:

> Who is right, I do not know
> But I am inclined to think
> That the rabbi and the monk
> Altogether stink.

FOUR

A few days later I ran into Fritz on the street, and he accompanied me on my way to the Public Library. He told me that after leaving me the other day those beautiful bars of the Haydn Mass had occurred to him again, and again intertwined with the tune of *Sch'ma Jisroel*, but this time with a difference. The traditional Hebrew melody had now sounded the way the fanatical, orthodox Jews of East Europe pronounce its text. They emphasize and prolong the last consonant of the last word of the creed. The last word *"echod"* (= the only one) is pronounced as if it were echo*ddd*. The d-sound is strongly accentuated and held a long time. It is as if the sentence, translated into English, were spoken thus: "The Lord is the only *onnne*."

"You know why that is?" asked Fritz, eager to explain it. "A rabbi pointed it out to me when I was a boy. According to the traditional interpretation, this kind of emphasized, prolonged pronunciation

should solemnly exclude any doubt that there could be any other god besides Jahweh. Not only is the belief in Him very much stressed by it, but also the fanatical negation of any other deity. How do you like that? And is such an emphasis not a passionate and violent rejection of the temptation to believe in some other gods? Jehovah had some powerful competitors, like Baal, Astarte, Dagon and so on. If there were no such temptation, the strong defense would be unnecessary. You have here a mighty undercurrent of a polytheistic belief in the middle of orthodox Judaism. In the light of history and of religious evolution, the Catholic and the Jewish creeds are not so different, after all."

I said a few words in praise of Fritz's acute observations. They flattered him visibly and to such an extent that he put his examples of musical associations at my disposal whenever I wished to publish them.

During the following conversation he confessed that it had always been difficult for him to believe in a god or gods, but he had felt less skeptical about goddesses. It was easier to acknowledge the possibility of their existence, at least in their human representatives. When he was young, he added, he was even inclined to a modest polytheism in this direction, but in his old age he had been converted to a strict, monotheistic belief, he did not know whether by choice or necessity. At all events, he regretted that he could not express his religious devotion in service more frequently. He confided to me that he was now unable to make love more than once, and complained in comparing the frustrating present with experiences of his youth. "Yes," he said, "to expect a repetition of the performance is as vain as waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ to which the faithful look forward." As so often with Fritz, I did not know whether I should enjoy his remark as witty or feel repelled by its atrocious blasphemy.

FIVE

A couple of weeks later Fritz and I had dinner together at a Viennese restaurant and, since it was a beautiful spring evening, we strolled along Fifth Avenue. We chatted about this and that, but there were some long unaccounted silences on his part. He seemed

to be depressed. "Anything wrong between you and Thea?" I cautiously asked, because I thought that a lover's quarrel had upset him. "Not a thing," he answered. "She is as charming and beautiful as always. Rather something wrong with me, I guess. I am thinking a lot about death in these last weeks. I feel old and very tired and I often think of giving up work. If the damned dollar would not be . . ." "Don't be silly," I said. "Think of Einstein, Churchill, Bertrand Russell. Life begins at seventy." "Alas, I don't belong to this illustrious group." "Think of Thea then!" "But I do," he vividly protested. "Which reminds me that I can add another sample to your collection of musical observations. The other day I thought again of death being near, I don't know why. To get away from my gloomy ideas, I went over to the piano and began to improvise. While I played some waltzes from the *Fledermaus*, my hands glided into the Funeral March of the *Eroica*. I assure you, I thought only of Old Vienna, but there it was and, so help me God, I could not get away from it. It was odd. What do you think?"

"Not much. It is your funeral," I said, because I am for the subtle approach in those matters and the colloquialism came handy at the moment.

"So it is," said Fritz, "although that *marcia funebre*—funny that Beethoven used the Italian name, isn't it?—is supposed to be a hero's funeral, presumably Napoleon's. Well, seen from a certain distance, any hero appears as a sort of comical figure, as a kind of buffoon of artificial self-importance. I am including myself, of course." I had no time to express my cordial agreement, at least for his own case, because I could not get a word in edgewise. "Now, wait a moment because the continuation is strange. I played on and on, into the second movement of the symphony when I suddenly caught myself going over to that popular lyric 'I wonder who's kissing her now.' When I played the funeral march again, that damned song hit intruded in the melody. While my right hand carried the *Eroica* melody, the left accompanied it with that tune. I was then called to the telephone, and when I returned and continued to improvise, neither of the two melodies appeared, but in their place a passage from that Mariazeller Mass by Haydn. Both my hands played the bars: *'Dona nobis pacem, Domine.'* I don't know whether these are the correct words, but it was very clearly that melody.

"I was surprised, surprised at myself, or, if you like, at my hands.

I thought then of you and of the method you recommended to find the threads to and between musical associations. I tried to apply it to this case. Just for the hell of it. I grant you, it was very amateurish, but I figured out what I must have thought while I improvised on the old instrument. The funeral march—well, that's clear enough—presents a presentiment of my death. Feeling sorry for myself, of course. I must have thought then of Thea after I am gone. I believe that she would really mourn for me. Yes, she would be genuinely grieved, no doubt, but life has to go on and so has love. She will console herself, and after some time she will have another and, let me hope, younger lover. She did not believe this when I told her, but time will tell. Faithfulness beyond the grave is, of course, nonsense, and it is quite futile to fight against human nature. Well, after some interval, dictated by her grief and by decency, she will have a new lover. I understand that, of course, but damn it all, how did our friend Arthur Schnitzler say: 'To understand is a sport like another and does not alleviate pain and grief'? A kind of prospective and postbumous jealousy tortured me, you see? Please don't look so superior! I know well enough how ludicrous it sounds. Anyhow, the idea gnawed at me. That is proved by the fact that the funeral march was all of a sudden accompanied by that popular tune, 'I wonder who's kissing her now.' You need not tell me that it is ridiculous, and I would not confess it to anybody but you. But I played on and on, the funeral march with the right, that sentimental song hit with the left, although I would not care who is kissing her now or rather then. Once the curtain has been rung down, what follows is another play and it is no longer important who will have the male lead. When I returned from the telephone, both tunes had disappeared and had been replaced by those bars from the Haydn Mass. Maybe I had a great desire for peace of mind or a wish to be free from all those oppressing ideas, of my death fear as well as of that ridiculous posthumous jealousy. That was expressed by that noble melody of *'Dona nobis pacem, Domine.'* Do you think that my analytic interpretation—or do you call it reconstruction?—is correct?"

"Yes, although it is, of course, incomplete. It is very likely that you skipped quite a few thoughts. There are missing links, so to speak, at the fringes of the cloth; for instance, some ideas on the hereafter. Your thought association 'I wonder who's kissing her now' proves that the idea of death is valid only as far as our conscious

thinking reaches. Unconsciously we do not believe in our death; we are, it seems, unable to conceive of ourselves as being nonexistent. Whenever we think of a future in which we are dead, we are in fantasy in some vague manner still present and alive. You, too, unconsciously believe in some continuation of life or in another kind of existence after what is called death."

"I wholeheartedly disagree with you there," Fritz exclaimed. "What happens to me—if you can still call it me at that point—after I am dead is a matter of utmost indifference. If you'll excuse the expression, it will leave me entirely cold. A continuation of life in the beyond? The very idea repels me. *Encore une fois?* Thank you, no! I had enough with this time. . . . By the way, don't you think that the soul—or the immortal entity, if you prefer it—is put on the spot in the beyond, according to religious beliefs? The question is only on which spot. The decision of choosing a residence will be difficult, I presume. I agree with the French writer—I forget his name—who stated that with regard to climate he prefers Heaven, while considering company he would rather choose Hell."

Fritz quoted that bon mot with as much pleasure as if he had tasted an exquisite delicacy. He likes those sayings of French coinage. While he spoke, he had become his old self again (and not so old either): an emotional man with quick gestures, bright eyes and a malicious or ironic smile around the mouth.

SIX

After he had left me, his last remark echoed in me and I came to the conclusion that the old party will land in Heaven after all. Returning in my thoughts to the subject of conflicting and interlocking melodies, I imagined Fritz would continue, in the beyond, to express his emotions in his characteristic manner. It amused me to imagine him as a bald and bold angel singing Mozart's *Alleluja* in the celestial choir, and seized by a sudden longing for Paris, gliding over to the frivolous tune "I am going to Maxim's, I am there *très intime.*" It would not be beyond him to disturb the harmony of the spheres. Maybe in the middle of a hymn in praise of the Almighty he would shock the other angels by asking them to join him in the chorus: "There is nothing like a dame." It is to be hoped that he

will then be cured of the jealousy that tortured him here below. He will perhaps still love Thea because illusions, treated and cultivated with extreme care, can be preserved for a very long time. Maybe he will still think frequently and with tenderness of her, and hum a line from Lehar's *Paganini* "No one loves you as I do . . ." interrupting the solemn chords of "Holy, Holy, Holy!" If there are musical messages from the beyond (which can be assumed because beautiful music seems to have descended directly from Heaven), Thea will have a strange experience. While she is with the lover who is kissing her now, a fleeting memory of dear, departed Fritz might occur to her together with that tender melody. But she will wonder why the sad mood of that tearful moment is followed in the next by a sparkling waltz tune from *The Merry Widow*.

PART TWO

Tantalizing Tunes

CHAPTER XII

La Forza del Destino

ONE

TO INTRODUCE the second part of this book, which deals with the intriguing problem of why a melody sometimes haunts us, it is perhaps advantageous to offer first two representative instances of that puzzling phenomenon. The first is in the lighter vein, the second is pathetic. A young man, married only a few months, complained in his analytic session that a cheap tune had pursued him since he opened his eyes this morning. It irritated him that the insignificant melody would not leave him. The line that stuck in his mind was: "It takes two to tango . . ." His thought associations led him back to the day before when his young wife told him about an invitation to a dance on the next evening. She wished him to take her to the party, but he was reluctant to do so. He finally yielded and promised to take her. Although his lingering resistance against the evening of dancing seemed to explain the recurrence of that melody ("It takes two to tango"), its tiring re-emergence continued until he remembered something else that had taken place later on. When the couple had gone to bed, the young wife behaved amorously, embraced him and cuddled up to him. The patient, who often cannot ward off the homosexual fantasies which had preoccupied him in his bachelor life, had difficulties in maintaining his erection. The emission of semen was premature and unpleasurable and the sexual act exhausted him. Only after he told me about this experience of the foregoing evening, did the second line of the tune occur to him:

It takes two to tango,
To do the dance of love.

The analytic continuation of that theme leads, of course, to impressions of the seriousness of the emotional conflict which occupied the patient and menaced his married life.

Here is the second example: A cultured, middle-aged man remembered that at a certain phase of the two years he spent as a prisoner in one of Hitler's concentration camps a certain melody followed him. The tune occurred to him when he woke up and was the last thing he thought of before he fell asleep, but he often thought of it in the middle of forced labor and in the most humiliating situations, even when he was in physical pain. He did not recognize the melody, but he felt it had a Mozartian purity and guessed it was an aria from one of the operas of this composer. He searched for a long time in his memory as to when or where he had heard it. Whenever the tune appeared, it had a comforting or consoling effect upon him. Finally, when once again he was trying to recall what the unrecognized tune was, he arrived by an odd detour at its identification.

Pursuing the idea that it was from a Mozart opera, he remembered that Goethe had loved the music of this composer while he did not highly appreciate the works of Beethoven. The well-read man thought then that the internal storms of Beethoven must have been close to Goethe's nature before he became the aloof and controlled Excellence of the Weimar court. Goethe's poem "Prometheus," in which a titanic rebellion and defiance against the gods comes to a forceful expression, occurred to him. The first lines of that poem were quickly replaced by another poem by Goethe, "The Wanderer's Night-Song."[1]

Thou that from heaven art,
Every pain and sorrow stillest,
And the double wretched breast
Doubly with refreshment fillest,
I am weary with contending
Why this rapture and unrest?
Peace descending
Come, O come, into my breast!

[1] Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. (The prisoner thought, of course, the German verses.)

The next thought concerned the following phase of Goethe's life, in which the young poet experienced the great emotional transformation on his journey to Italy. In the next moment that haunting melody re-emerged in the man's thoughts, but this time with the first four words of the aria's text:

Pace, pace, mio Dio . . .

The prisoner remembered then that the aria appears in Verdi's *La Forza del Destino,* an opera he had seen a long time before in Milan. He further remembered that the aria was sung by Leonora, the heroine whose evil fate is presented together with that of her family and her lover. The plot of the opera was not remembered.

The keyword connecting the melody and Goethe's poem is, of course, peace.[2] In the emerging melody was expressed not only his longing for peace, but, as the prisoner realized later on, the consoling thought that there remained always the redemption by suicide if the tortures of the concentration camp should become intolerable.

The associative train of thought in the prisoner's mind has its point of departure in his attempt to remember the name of the melody that had haunted him. The thought led from Mozart, whom he mistakenly considered its composer, to Beethoven and to the Beethovenian "storm and stress" phase of Goethe's early manhood. In the emergence of Goethe's poem the reference to the man's terrible situation occurred along with a rebellious and defiant impulse against his Nazi torturers. The fleeting impulse is immediately rejected because such resistance is hopeless. A deep longing for peace, whose poetic expression is contained in those verses of "The Wanderer's Night-Song," then announced itself. The next association reminded the man that Goethe reached the peace for which he so passionately craved much later on his journey to Italy. Together with this association, the haunting melody reappeared with the first words of the aria, as if the thought of Italy had brought back to mind the forgotten text:

Pace, pace, mio Dio . . .

The identification of the melody immediately followed.

[2] Goethe's poem had originally the title *"Um Friede"* ("For peace"). It was contained in a letter to Mrs. von Stein of February 12, 1776.

It is remarkable that the melody that haunted the prisoner emerged first without words, so to speak, as the fullest musical expression of that longing for peace. The unconscious wish to attain peace by suicide was there long before the text was remembered. The tune had been the purest emotional expression of that deeply felt desire, an expression that did not need words and was self-sufficient in its emotional effect. The words were, so to speak, a later addition, like an incantation spoken by the sorcerer, as an extra spell added to his original magical action.

TWO

The description and analytic evaluation of this representative example will, I hope, help to make the psychological differences between musical associations, in general, and haunting melodies clearer. It is obvious that these differences are not appropriately described in restricting their characterization to the factors of repetitiousness and insistence or persistence. The haunting melody did not have in this case that so often tiresome character that signifies pursuing tunes. They usually change from undesired to undesirable thoughts in a short time. The frequent emergence of this particular melody always had a consoling effect.

The differences between a musical association that occurs to a person in the middle of aim-directed thoughts and of a melody that pursues him can best be compared to that between a fancy or whimsical thought and an obsessive idea. The characterization of the haunting melody as a musical obsessional thought is illuminating in many ways: those tunes invade and usurp the mental sphere against resistance, and occupy its realm for hours and sometimes for days. Their victim does not know and cannot tell us why this particular melody is pursuing him. He very often cannot even identify the tune that at a certain time came unasked and unwanted into his thought and behaved after its intrusion as if it were there to stay, exactly as do obsessive thoughts.

Compulsive patients replace deeds by thinking and unconsciously expect that their thought activity, especially when it is in the form of word presentations, will solve the conflicts and difficulties of their lives. Words thus become instruments to master things. In this regression to thoughts that are verbalized, the course of events is

supposedly determined. Thoughts and words obtain a magical power in the mental sphere and can kill and bring to life again; can replace deeds. They fulfill secret wishes, ward off forbidden impulses and atone for them. The haunting melody replaces the magic of words by the omnipotence of the tune. In the melody that pursues a person, derivatives of unconscious suppressed impulses and of defenses against them break through the surface and often form a compromise expression. The belief in the omnipotence of words is here replaced by the unconscious conviction that tunes are almighty, can fulfill concealed wishes and protect us from hidden dangers. Here an attempt is made to master the reality by the magical power of music.

In obsessive thinking the overemphasized thought process is isolated from the emotions that were once connected with it. It seems then as if the person is occupied only with unalterably intellectual, sometimes highly abstract problems. The warded-off emotions return and can be reconstructed in analytic investigation. In the phenomenon of the haunting melody, a similar separation or isolation is operating in the opposite direction. The melody appears as the expression of emotions in an artistic form without any content, but analytic exploration will disclose that those emotions are intimately connected with certain thoughts, refer to certain interests or aims that remain unconscious to the person. The puzzling phenomenon of the haunting melody presents itself to the psychologist as an artistic expression in the secret service of the same drives and impulses which create obsessive thoughts as their pathological counterpart. It is certainly significant that these forces express their magic power in the form of music, but we feel justified in leaving the factor of the artistic value of the melody to another discussion and to restrict this one to the core of the psychological problem. In defense of the priority of this point of view we can mention that the aesthetic value of the melody that pursues us is often not very high. A cheap song hit can haunt us as persistently as a melody from a Mozart or Beethoven symphony.

The haunting tune can be trifling and insignificant, but the emotions and problems expressed in its emergence are always meaningful. They reflect the concealed basic demands of the drives and fears of the person and seek to convey his most important interests and impulses. The instance of the aria from *La Forza del Destino* in

this introductory chapter is also illustrative of this aspect. The examples given and fully analyzed in the following chapters will confirm our impression that the haunting melody always conveys a momentous message: Thus, destiny knocks at the door of conscious thinking.

CHAPTER XIII

Refrain of a Song

ONE

SOME YEARS AGO I happened to read in the New York *Times* the obituary of a young woman, the daughter of a composer of popular songs, who was quite unknown to me.[1] A sentence she had once said to her father, when she was a small girl, had been used by him as a refrain of one of his songs: "Daddy, you've been a mother to me."

During the next few days these words, accompanied by a simple tune, ran through my mind at odd times and for no apparent reason. I imagined them spoken by a motherless little girl in an outburst of appreciation for a father who had taken kind and loving care of her. I suspected some personal reason why this popular lyric came to my mind again and again, but I could not understand what that reason might be, since my wife is alive and my children had the care and affection of their mother.

The phrase occurred to me again with special persistence when a patient of mine, a young woman in her early thirties, complained about lack of consideration from her husband, who was much older than she. She complained that he was domineering and selfish, did not pay enough attention to her and was in no way comparable to the ideal image of a husband she had daydreamed of in her girlhood. Her relationship with other men during her late teens and early twenties had also been emotionally unsatisfactory. She had often

[1] Later I found out that the name of the composer is Fred Fisher.

complained about the inconsiderateness and brutality of the average male.

I knew, of course, that childhood experiences had, to a great extent, caused her inability to get along with men. Her mother had died when she was four years old, and her father, a busy department store manager, had paid little attention to the girl. He put her in the care of his sister, and the child rarely saw her father after he remarried a year later.

This childhood was certainly in no way comparable to the situation presupposed in the song, except that my patient had also lost her mother when she was a child. No such affectionate ties as were expressed in the song existed between father and daughter in the case of my patient. There was even considerable resentment on the part of the girl, who accused her father of having deserted her. Why then did the refrain of the song again occur to me?

The reason dawned on me shortly after an analytic session, when I formulated a psychological insight that had been vaguely in my mind for a long time. Apparently this tiny contribution had unconscious threads tying it to the words of the refrain.

During recent years, many impressions had led me to an hypothesis which had remained unformulated, without shape or voice, in an embryonic state. This unborn brain child needed a new push to be delivered. The value of the new insight was small enough. It was but an indifferent contribution to our understanding of woman's psychology. It was rather the process of its emergence, the genesis and birth of an idea that made me jot down these notes.

Many thoughts of ours lead a kind of shadow existence. They remain on the fringes of our conscious experience, even after numerous impressions are condensed, and seem to push in the direction of recognition. One understands much later—and often one does not understand even then—that an accidental experience, some words heard or read, some inconspicuous new impression facilitates their arrival at the surface of conscious thinking. They help to change their shadowy character into verbalized insight. This new impression can be of little or doubtful value by itself, but its power appears in the breakthrough to the level of understanding. It seems that a new fact, an external coincidence, is unconsciously conceived as a confirmation of a still timid thought possibility, and thus helps the pre-existent idea achieve light and life. The new impression serves

as a midwife at the delivery of a thought we have carried with us a long time.

TWO

It will be necessary to sketch a map of the area in which my insight appeared, namely in the territory bordering Freud's investigation of emotional differences between the sexes. In the evolution of her love life, the girl has one task more than the boy, as Freud has shown many times.[2] The mother is the first love object for both sexes. Her care and affection pave the way for sexual and tender choice of objects for both the little boy and the little girl. There is, however, a very important difference between the sexes later on. The boy whose first love object is his mother may turn to his sister as an object of sexual and affectionate desires. Perhaps friends of his sister will follow, and will later be replaced by women outside the circle of his family. His objects will all be females and, if all goes well, feminine women.

For the girl, the mother is also the first love object. But she later replaces the mother by a male when new stimuli make a member of the opposite sex attractive to her, and her father or brother becomes the object of her love. But what causes the female child to give up her first love object, to renounce her mother as the object of her affection and of undefined sexual desires? Freud answers that the fixation of the little girl on her mother is dissolved because the child experiences a disappointment in this relationship. The ties are loosened when the child makes her mother responsible for not equipping her with the same sexual organ as a boy, that is, under the influence of the infantile penis-envy. Only then the little girl turns to the father for love. The Oedipus situation thus is a secondary formation for the female child. Another consequence of the loss of the first love object is that the girl identifies with her mother, tries to take over her role. Identification with the old object replaces fixation on it.

This theory of Freud, a result of many years of observation, has been verified by the experience of almost all psychoanalysts. Many vicissitudes in the development of women can be traced back to the

[2] For instance, in the paper "Einige psychologische Folgen des anatomischen Geschlechtsunterschieds." *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. XI.

transition from mother to father as love object, and to the fact that the girl child, unlike the boy, has the added difficulty of transferring love from one sex to another. The process of the relaxation of the old ties and the transference to the new rarely runs smoothly. Not only in our patients, but also in other women, one may observe how old relationships with the mother are transferred to new relationships with a sweetheart or a husband; sometimes to such an extent that married life repeats the original feelings of childhood. The pattern-forming influence of early experiences with Mother can sometimes be observed in the relationship with a man very late in life. The other day a patient said in an argument with her husband, "You treat me just as unfairly as my mother did."

THREE

It was from this area of the feminine transition from the original love object to the man that my still unformulated thoughts branched off. It is obvious that the transition is difficult because of the tenacity we attribute to the libido. But this difficulty exists for the little boy as well as for the girl. It dawned upon me that the little girl's new object, the father, creates an added psychological problem for her. Not only is his character different, but the relationship of a father to his little daughter is necessarily of another kind than that of a mother. A man's talking and playing, his caresses and care, will not be the same as a woman's. In this divergence the fundamental psychological difference between the sexes is reflected.

According to all psychological laws, the little girl expects that she will receive from her father the same warmth and consideration, the same kind of tender understanding she once had from her mother. But even if her father pays much attention to her and shows her a good deal of affection, it is almost impossible that he could express the same love for the child as her mother did. It is in the nature of fatherhood that there cannot be the same delicacy of feeling, the same psychological understanding for the needs of a little girl. He will certainly understand her less and misunderstand her oftener, since the whole attitude of a man toward a female child is not the same as that of a woman.

It is natural that the child would expect the same kind of love when she turns from her mother to her father. When one has been

frustrated, one hopes that a new situation will restore the old lost happiness. Even existence in the beyond (if such a contradictory expression is allowed) is conceived of as an improved or glorified repetition of life here below. The paradise of the Mohammedans is full of beautiful nymphs, the houris; while to many Christians it is a place where all their wishes will be fulfilled, a fool's paradise—quite apart from the fact that only fools believe in paradise. The imminent expectance of the little girl to find again a mother's love in the new relationship is often disappointed. Memory traces of that old, ideal relationship will continue to live in her, unaffected, untouched by new impressions.

Here is a psychological factor whose importance for the love life of women has scarcely ever been discussed in analytic literature. Here is an emotional difficulty in the development of the girl which has no parallel in the boy. Boys, too, expect to find the same kind of love when they replace the mother by another object. But the difference is that they do find at least traces of the same feminine attitude in later attachments.

The readjustment of the girl to the new situation is a slow process. In time she learns to appreciate and admire the masculine qualities of her father, and later on of other men. She even begins to love certain male attitudes toward her in contrast to the attitude of her mother. But the impact of the past will nevertheless be felt, however consciously forgotten or only vaguely remembered, the memory of love from a mother and for a mother will remain pattern-forming in any new phase. The girl may find satisfaction in the relationship with men, but there will be a residue of longing for the kind of love she experienced from Mother. As the twig of love is bent in the infant, so the bough of the woman's desire will grow. She really wants the affection of a man together with the consideration and tenderness she received in her early years, a love that comprises both a mother's and a father's.

This emotional undercurrent exists beside and beyond the mature attitude in which the woman identifies with her mother, and. in which she is ready and willing to give, in turn, maternal love to her own children—and, to some extent, even to her husband. (Freud once said that a marriage is only sure when the wife is able to have a maternal attitude to her husband.) There remains the unconscious hope of receiving the tenderness and affection of her mother from

her husband or lover—to find the best of the original in the substitute. The woman has given up her mother as a love object, but she has not renounced entirely the demand for maternal love.

At this point, many questions will occur to the psychologist about the emotional importance of this unconscious experience in adult women and its impact on their relationship with the men they choose as objects, questions whose answers still elude us.

FOUR

During some years of analytic practice, an abundance of impressions had gathered whose condensation should have led me to this point. The digestion of so much food for thought should have resulted in sound psychological conclusions, but I remained in the no man's land of hunches and guesses, of half-formed ideas and insights. I had missed the boat that should have brought me to the shore of conscious thought. It was in this state that I stumbled on the quotation from the old song. Even then I could not understand why the words of a little girl spoken to her father thirty years before should occur to me again and again.

When they came to mind during the analytic session with the young woman patient, it was obviously because of the violent contrast in the attitude of the two fathers. The neglect and lack of concern on the part of my patient's father brought sharply into focus the significance of the tenderness and consideration shown by the other father, who had succeeded so well in taking over the maternal role.

Here were two widely different cases of a father's treatment of his little daughter. (It is a matter of psychological interest that neither one represents the average.) It was precisely this contrast which worked upon my unconscious preoccupation with the problem of the transition phase in feminine psychology and facilitated the progress of my undeveloped thoughts to formulated ideas. The words, "Daddy, you've been a mother to me," made transparent a hidden condition of a woman's love. She will wish to be loved by men the way women are loved, with strength and initiative, protection and support. But she will also want to be loved the way her mother once loved her, although this desire remains unconscious.

Many situations in married life become complicated by the influence of this concealed factor. How many husbands are capable of meeting the unconscious requirement of having not only a man's affection and regard for their wives, but also a mother's delicacy and tenderness? The doubt felt by so many women as to whether or not they are sufficiently loved, or loved the right way, has perhaps one of its unconscious roots in this unrealized and unrealizable expectation. But could not something similar be asserted for the man? A wife's love is, of course, not the same as a mother's. Nevertheless, both are feminine. The added complication for the woman is that her husband or lover cannot fulfill her expectation just because he is a man who lacks certain basic feminine attitudes. There is perhaps more than we thought in the fact that disappointed wives so frequently return to Mother. *"On revient toujours à ses premiers amours."* Here is an emotional regression to the first love object of the girl. At all events, a theme well worth investigation by psychologists.

FIVE

To return to our original subject, all was psychologically ready for the emergence of this bit of insight before I read the obituary in the New York *Times*. Enough material from analytic practice and observation of acquaintances and friends as well as from my own experience had been at my disposal long before. But all had remained unformed and unformulated, indefinite and undefined, until the chance reading of some words spoken by a little girl more than thirty years ago helped to transform a hunch into clear recognition.

It is strange that even this recognition, when it broke through, did not concern the original problem of feminine psychology which had occupied my thoughts. What prevented it from penetrating to the level of conscious understanding? The dynamics of our thought processes are by no means known to us. To which kind of procedure are our thoughts and images subjected before they emerge in our minds clearly and definitely: what gives them shape and conscious content allowing us to verbalize them? Is there a process in the life of our thoughts comparable to the development of a negative in photography? Is the addition of a new impression or experience needed to bring an idea into the open? Or does the unconscious process need a

certain time until it works its way through obstacles and inhibitions to the conscious level?

There are more questions of this kind. Let me freely confess that I did not get any definite answer, but I arrived, at least, at a partial solution of the little problem of why the sentence, "Daddy, you've been a mother to me," worked upon me and why it opened a door that had been closed to me before.

SIX

Some years ago, physicians made the diagnosis that my wife had an incurable disease. To my grief and worry was added the concern about my younger daughter, who was then only five years old. The doctor told me my wife's disease would not necessarily have any considerable influence upon her life expectancy. She could live fifteen or twenty years longer, as an invalid, but it was also possible that an unexpected complication could bring about a rapid lethal development. What would happen to my little girl if my wife should suddenly die? I hoped, of course, that she would live at least until Miriam would be able to fend for herself. I know myself well enough to realize that I lack the patience and talent to deal with children and that I am poorly equipped to furnish a mother's care to a little girl. I could never console her or fill the gap in her life. She would not only sometimes, but always, feel like a motherless child. In the middle of working days and in nights when I could not fall asleep, this concern about my little daughter emerged among the other sorrows and griefs of that time.

When now, many years later, I came across that sentence, "Daddy, you've been a mother to me," it must have worked on me by way of unconscious memory of that past situation and by comparison of myself with that other father. The words of the little girl shamed me because they reminded me that I would never have deserved such praise in the same situation. Following this train of thought, I must have searched myself, and asked what kind of a father I really was to my children. I provided for them as well as I could. I tried to secure their future, that is true. But did I otherwise give them enough attention and consideration? Over-worked and prematurely aged, I had not spent as much time with them, and had not paid as much

attention to them, as other fathers. In fairness to myself, I had to say I had been a worried father, but had I been a good one? Had I not been too permissive and lenient on one hand, and often too impatient on the other?

At this point, suddenly and puzzlingly, the image of Alfred Kerr emerged in my mind. He was the most prominent literary critic of Europe, one of the most brilliant German stylists of our time. I saw him in my mind, his bald head, and his full beard surrounding his chin, saw him vividly gesticulating in conversation with me. That was when I visited him at his cottage at Grunewald near Berlin. Was it in 1911? He wrote, then, the preface to my first psychoanalytic book, a study on Gustave Flaubert. How young and enthusiastic I was then! Is it really more than forty years ago? But why did I now think of Alfred Kerr? Occasionally and very rarely he wrote verses, and some of them now came to mind. Two stanzas only: Friendship vanishes and so does love when in the tempest of life's struggle with each other all human relationships perish. Parents abide. I now remember the last stanza in German:

Eines starken Engels Hand
Soll es über'm Toten-Land
In die ew'gen Sterne schreiben:
Eltern bleiben!

which might be translated into English:

High above our dead one's land
In eternal starry light
An angel's great and mighty hand
Will inscribe it in the night:
Parents abide.

I know why I thought of Kerr. His verses say that the relationship between parents and children survives all others. Perhaps my children will think not unkindly of me later, when I am gone. I cannot compare myself with that other father, the composer, but I was not a total failure. I now realize that my original theme, woman's unconscious expectation of a mother's tenderness and consideration in a man's love, had been approached from two sides. The song refrain

harked back to childhood and made the genesis of that subterranean expectation transparent by means of an exceptional case in which a father really met the expectation. The case of my patient provided the contrast: her father did not make any effort to fill the gap her mother's death had left. Continuation of the two trains of thought must have met in the unconscious as two groups of workers digging from opposite ends meet, finally, in the middle of a tunnel.

The contrast between the case of my patient and that of the little girl whose Daddy had been a mother to her paved the way for the return to my original theme, to the thought germs concerning the character of woman's love requirements. My patient had complained about her husband's lack of consideration and affection and had accused her father of having neglected and deserted her. The pattern-forming value of the father-daughter relationship, and its importance for relations with other men later on in life, became very clear now, especially since I remembered other cases which seemed to confirm my hypothesis with regard to the difficulties of a little girl's transition from mother to father as love object.

The conclusion was inescapable that it is a general aspect of women's attitude to unconsciously desire an element of maternal consideration from the men they love, because vestiges of the original relationship with the mother remain after they have turned to persons of the male sex. Thus, my thoughts regained the general theme, like groups of excursionists who have gone astray rejoining the main party.

The unconscious thought that my own daughter could have become motherless and I could have had to take her mother's place, resonated with the sentiment of the composer's daughter. I was reminded that I would be very inferior to her more considerate and gentle father. But beyond this shameful recognition, there was some hidden satisfaction in the comparison, a satisfaction whose nature now became clear. The dreaded possibility did not become reality: I am more fortunate than the song writer. My daughter celebrates her thirteenth birthday as I am writing these lines, and her mother is still alive and, although an invalid, looks after her and gives her all the affection she needs. Thank God, Miriam need never say, "Daddy, you've been a mother to me."

SEVEN

I do not attribute much merit to the very slight contribution to the psychology of women implied in the foregoing paragraphs. No doubt other psychoanalysts have come to similar conclusions, since we all work with the same human material, and we all apply the same method of psychological investigation. I am really more interested in the psychological problem of how the insight was reached. How long and circular is the path from an initial hunch to a formulated idea, to an understanding that can be verbalized and clearly perceived! How long it takes from the first dawn of an idea to the daylight of formulated thoughts!

Let me use a comparison: A man applies for a government job and delivers his application to the personnel department on the first floor. After some time, the man wants to find out what happened to his application and goes to the same office. The application is not there any more. He is told that it is perhaps at an office on the third or fourth floor—one cannot be positive which. A few weeks later, the applicant is informed that his document is now in an office on the ninth floor. He gets what is generally known as "the run-around" in the following weeks. If he is lucky, he will eventually discover that his application will soon reach the fourteenth floor where his destiny may be decided.

Similar to such a procedure is the development of an unconscious idea, in contrast to that of a conscious thought or logical consideration. It takes a long time for the application to get from the first floor to the fourteenth, though an elevator makes it in one minute. There are mysterious slowdowns and quickenings, retardations and accelerations in the ascent, as interested persons intercede or interfere, pull hidden strings. Just so, unconscious agents favor or retard the development of an unconscious thought process.

Our final impression is, however: How far we live from our own inner experiences! How little we know about ourselves even when we are psychologists, or should I say *especially* when we are psychologists? How seldom we discover what we really are like! A person who seeks to find out will meet an unknown entity. You can have only a blind date with yourself.

CHAPTER XIV

Aria without Words

ONE

THERE IS an unknown melody that has been haunting me now for several days. It appears sometimes very clearly, and sometimes only the first bars are heard by the inner ear as a faint echo. It came like an unannounced guest one has once known, but whose name one has forgotten. Its repeated emergence irks me now, and I try to turn it away as if the unrecognized guest had stayed too long and has become wearisome. If I but knew what that tune is! I am searching in vain in my memory. I must have heard it long, long ago. Where was it?

Was it not in the Vienna Opera? It occurs to me that the melody I do not recognize must have something to do with my father. . . . My memory calls his image up . . . his face . . . his side whiskers . . . his beard was like Kaiser Franz Josef's . . . or rather like Jacques Offenbach's. . . . The image of the composer emerges quite distinctly as if it were a photograph. . . . The penetrating eyes and the pince-nez on a ribbon. . . . And then I know suddenly what the melody is: the aria of Antonia from *The Tales of Hoffmann*. As if a floodgate had been opened, an abundance of images emerges. When my sister and I went to the Vienna Opera for the first time in 1901, I was thirteen years old.

We had heard our father speak about *The Tales of Hoffmann* before. At the first performance of Offenbach's opera in 1881, a terrible

fire had consumed the Vienna Ringtheater. Many hundreds of people had perished; my father had saved himself by jumping from a window. Many superstitious persons in our city, at that time, had tried to establish a connection between the catastrophe and the personality of the composer. They said Offenbach had an "evil eye" whose glances had magical power to harm people. They called him a "jettatore," meaning a wicked sorcerer. Poor Offenbach, whose picture we had seen and in whom we had discovered a likeness to our father, had in fact not lived to witness the opening performance of his opera.

The Tales of Hoffmann had not been performed in Vienna for a long time, in fact, not until 1901. My sister and I were agog with anticipation. In those days, the performances of the Opera were a frequent subject of discussion in the homes of the middle-class people of musical Vienna. We had often heard the orchestra praised and the individual singers evaluated. Then there was the new director whose artistic and creative zeal had revolutionized the old institution and who had become the subject of bitter contention and ardent enthusiasm. Every one of the performances which he conducted aroused a storm of controversy: his lack of respect for tradition which he had once characterized as "sloppiness," his startling innovations, his musicianship and his inspired energy which demanded perfection from himself and those working with him. His name, which we heard spoken so often at home, was Gustav Mahler. We were told that he would conduct the orchestra.

Memories emerge of our first night at the Opera House; the crowded theater, the box reserved for the Court, the tuning of the instruments. The lights are out now; only stage and orchestra are illuminated. Hurrying toward the conductor's stand, we see a man of small stature with the ascetic features of a medieval monk. His eyes are flashing behind his glasses. He glances, as if in fury, at the audience that applauds his appearance. He raises the baton and throws himself, with arms uplifted, ecstatically almost, into the flood of melody.

TWO

Slowly the curtain rises. There is a students' tavern, the young men drinking, boasting and jesting. Hoffmann, the poet and musician, appears on the scene and is teased by his comrades because he has fallen in love once again. They ask him to recount the story of his foolish amours and he begins: "The name of my first beloved was Olympia. . . ."

The play takes us back, in the ensuing act, to what happened to young E. T. A. Hoffmann as he met Olympia in the home of the famous scientist Spalanzani, whose daughter she appears to be. It is love at first sight, with no realization that she is not a living woman but an automatic doll, fashioned with the utmost skill. The charming girl is seen at a party. When Spalanzani pushes a concealed button, she speaks, she walks, she sings and dances. Hoffmann confesses his love for her and is elated when he hears her "yes." She dances with him until exhausted, then her father or maker leads her to her chamber. Then, a malignant-looking man by the name of Coppelius enters in a rage and claims to have been swindled by Spalanzani. Vengefully, he manages to slip into Olympia's chamber and to smash the magnificent doll Spalanzani's cleverness had wrought. E. T. A. Hoffmann is made the butt of the assembled guests' ridicule for having fallen in love with a lifeless automaton.

The second act takes place in Venice, at the home of beautiful Giulietta, who receives the young poet as graciously as she does all the other young men to whom she grants her favors. Dapertutto, a demoniac figure, bribes the siren to make a play for Hoffmann's love. She promises to the ardent poet the key to her bedroom. He, however, gets into a fight with another of her lovers and kills him. She jilts Hoffmann, who finds her chamber deserted and espies her, in the embraces of another, entering a gondola which floats down the Canalo Grande.

The third act is laid in Munich, in the house of old Crespel, with whose fair daughter, Antonia, Hoffmann has fallen in love. The girl has inherited her mother's beautiful singing voice but also her fatal disease, consumption. Father and lover plead with her not to sing. But Dr. Mirakel, a physician and an evil sorcerer, makes her doubtful again when he reproaches her for giving up a promising career. In her presence he conjures up the spirit of her dead mother who joins with Dr. Mirakel in his exhortations to break her promise and to continue with her singing. Antonia yields and dies while singing her aria. Dr. Mirakel, then, disappears, emitting peals of triumphant, mocking laughter, leaving father and lover prey to their despair.

In the epilogue, we witness the same scene as in the beginning: the students singing and jesting, shouting "bravo" to Hoffmann's tale of his thwarted love. He, in turn, proceeds to drown his grief in drink.

When I went to the opera that evening, I had expected a light and amusing operetta in the manner of *La Belle Hélène* or *Orphée aux enfers*, with sparkling melodies, debunking gods and heroes of Greek mythology. But this opera was so different. It made a deep impression on the thirteen-year-old boy. For many weeks afterwards, some tune from *The Tales of Hoffmann*, such as the charming aria of Olympia, the chorus of the guests, the moving aria of Antonia, haunted me. Images from the performance recurred to the inner eye: there were the evil and demoniac figures of Coppelius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel, played by the same singer. They appeared as personifications of a mysterious power that destroys again and again the young poet's love and happiness. Also, the image of the pale face of Gustav Mahler himself reappeared, looking like a sorcerer, like a spiritualized Dr. Mirakel, performing wonders with the orchestra. And then the female figures, played, as they were, by the same singer: Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia. They appeared to be three women in one, a triad which is always the same. There was, in the boy, a fore-knowledge or presentiment of a deeper meaning behind the succession of the three loves and their tragic endings, but this concealed meaning eluded him whenever he tried to penetrate the mystery.

THREE

When I heard the opera again, almost twenty years later, that which had been dark, became transparent. It was like developing an old photographic plate. The chemical processes to which the plate had been subjected, in the meantime, had made it possible to obtain now a positive print. The triad had revealed its secret in the light of what I had learned and experienced in psychoanalysis.

In every one of his attachments, young Hoffmann had met an antagonist called variously, Coppelius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel. This secret opponent was out to defeat the poet; he turned the beloved against Hoffmann or destroyed her. At the beginning we see Hoffmann infatuated or in love. We see him broken in spirit, in misery and despair, at the end. The easily inflamed passion of the

young man meets an antagonistic power, self-deceiving and self-harming, which causes him to fail. That which makes him luckless and miserable is conceived as outside forces. But is it not rather some agent within himself emerging from dark subterranean depths? The sinister figures, who blind him about Olympia, who cause Giulietta to jilt him, and to bring death and destruction to Antonia, are personifications only of a foiling power which is an unconscious part of Hoffmann himself. This hidden factor, which frustrates him each time in the end, is operative already in his choices of his love objects. As if led by a malicious destiny, as if thwarted by a demon, he falls in love each time with a woman who is unsuitable: Olympia, a lifeless automaton, Giulietta, a vixen, and Antonia, doomed from the beginning.

The personalities of the three women, themselves, as well as the sequence of their succession, seem to express a concealed significance, hint at a symbolic meaning behind the events. It is as if the author was presenting not only the particular case of this German poet and musician, Hoffmann, but beyond that a situation of universal significance. Does the play want to say that every young man follows such a pattern in his loves? Yet our feeling balks at such a meaning. We find ourselves at a kind of psychological impasse, both willing and recalcitrant to believe, feeling a fusion and confusion of emotions which oppose each other. We sense there is a hidden general meaning; yet what happens to E. T. A. Hoffmann, especially his loves for those strange female characters, is so specific and personal that it cannot relate to us.

The closest coincidence to the love life of the average young man may be seen in Hoffmann's infatuation for Giulietta the heartless Venetian courtesan, who wants to enslave him for reasons of her own. Her charm fills him with consuming fire, he puts himself in bondage to her, ready to sacrifice all to his passion. Need we search here for a deeper meaning? We have the lady of easy or absent virtue, who plays with all men and with whom all men play. Here we really have a type which is to be found in every man's life; the object of uninhibited sexual wishes, the mistress desirable in the flesh.

But what should we think of Olympia? We meet here with an odd love object, something almost incredible. The girl walks and laughs, speaks, dances and sings. She is as Hoffmann discovers later and too late, really only an automaton, and does not function unless

her clever creator pushes certain buttons. Where is the place of such a strange creature in every man's life? Should we assume that the author wanted to give an exaggerated caricature of the baby-faced, doll-like darling who has no life of her own, the girl without brains and personality, the society glamor girl, the plaything and toy? Such an interpretation is tempting, it makes rational sense, but remains unconvincing. And Antonia? Should she be regarded as the woman who hesitates between choosing a man or a career? But her character does not tally with this concept. The outstanding feature, after all, is the menace of death connected with her singing.

If we tentatively accept these rational concepts, we arrive at the conclusion that the author wanted to portray three typical figures who play a role in a young man's life. They are the child-woman, the siren and the artist, or a woman who oscillates between wanting to be a wife or to follow a career. Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia would then represent three types whom every young man meets and finds attractive in different ways, appealing as they do to the playful, the sensual and the affectionate part in him. Was this in the writer's mind when he created the three women representative of their sex? Have we now reached a better understanding?

If we have, we do not feel satisfied yet. Something warns us against contenting ourselves with such an interpretation. Should we give up our attempts at searching for a deeper meaning in the three female figures? Should we not rather take them at the value of their beautiful faces? We cannot do it. We cannot escape the haunting impression of a concealed significance. There is the repetitive character in spite of individual variations, the hidden logic which gives the play its tragic atmosphere. The sinister figures of the mysterious antagonist intensify the impression. They give to the events on the stage a sense of something preordained and fateful which cannot be accidental. Other traits, too, make it evident that the author was well aware of the veiled significance, for instance, the remark of one of the students after Hoffmann has told the story of his loves: "I understand, three dramas in one drama."

Besides and beyond such small but telling items in the text, there is the force of this music in which the secret power of the inevitable, the shadow of near death and the spell of destiny have been transformed into song. This power is felt in the playful and sparkling tunes of the students, in the Mozartian entrance of the guests, in the

sweet aria of Olympia and in the alluring Barcarolle of Giulietta. It laughs and mocks in Dr. Mirakel's tunes. It pleads in Hoffmann's confessions of love, in the exhortations of the dead mother and in Antonia's swan song. There is something in the conjuring power of this music, in the depths of feeling it stirs, in the death fear and death desire it pours into unforgettable melodies, which does not allow you to escape from this haunting sense of a concealed significance. Whether or not the librettist meant to express a symbolic meaning, there can be no doubt that the composer did. There is more in the events on the stage and in this music than what meets the eye and the ear.

FOUR

Impossible, that the interpretation of the three feminine figures has reached the deepest level yet. They must be more than mere types of women, even if they are also that. There is something more meaningful in the three acts than the choice of three girls and three disappointments in love. The rational concept of the meaning of the three women all of a sudden strikes me as superficial, flat and banal. It is very possible, even probable, that such a commonplace was in the mind of the writer, but unconsciously he said more than he consciously knew, expressed a meaning beyond his grasp. It should not he forgotten that the French librettist took the material of the text from *The Tales of Hoffmann* from various novels by the German writer Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822), whom he then made the leading figure of the opera. In these stories, Hoffmann showed a strange mixture of the realistic and the fantastic, of the grotesque and the tragic, creating a ghastly, haunting atmosphere even where he depicts only everyday events. Offenbach's melodies communicate to you the deeper insight; they speak immediately to your emotions, alerted as they are by the hidden element of the dramatic action, although the plot itself presents only the surface aspect of something elusive and mystifying.

In a situation like this, psychoanalytic interpretation comes into its own, furnishing a key as it does to a locked room, allowing us to penetrate below the surface of conscious thinking. There is not much of a mystery about Giulietta: she remains the "courtesan with brazen

mien," as she is called in the play. What might give us food for thought is rather her place in the sequence of the female figures. She stands in the middle, following after Olympia, the doll, and preceding Antonia over whom looms the shadow of death. Since Giulietta represents the woman who arouses and appeals to man's sensual desires, promising their fulfillment, her middle position in the sequence suggests the interpretation that in her is represented the figure which governs the mature years of a man's life.

More intriguing is the personality of Olympia. How does this doll, the child-woman appear in the light of psychoanalytic interpretation? What can be the significance of her appearance in Hoffmann's life, with this mixture of features, both grotesque and pathetic? Freud has taught us that the hidden meaning of many dreams, neurotic symptoms and other products of unconscious activity remains obscure as long as their manifest content alone is taken into consideration. In certain instances the concealed meaning of a dream, for example, can only be understood by reversing important parts of the dream plot. Then, and only then, and in no other way, may the meaning be unraveled from the distortions in such cases. Olympia is a doll who speaks and moves and sings only if and when appropriate buttons are pushed, when she is being led and manipulated. If we are to reverse the story, we get the picture of Hoffmann being led by hidden strings like a marionette. Or, if we go one step farther, he is made to walk and talk and sing and act like an infant. The reversal of this part of the plot seems thus to place the story of Hoffmann's first love in his infancy. The poet appears in the reversal as a little boy, and Olympia as representing his mother who plays with him. He cannot act independently of her, and follows her about. If we are willing to trust this psychoanalytic interpretation which, after all, does not sound any more fantastic than the story of Hoffmann's first love in the operatic plot, some meaning in the succession of the two figures dawns on us: Olympia and Giulietta. If Olympia represents the mother, the first love object of the small boy, then Giulietta is the woman loved and desired by the grown man, the object of his passionate wishes, the mistress who gratifies his sensual desires.

But what is bidden then behind the last figure? Who is concealed behind Antonia? When we trust to psychoanalytic interpretation, this riddle will not be hard to solve. Antonia vacillates between her

love for Hoffmann and her love for music. She disobeys the warnings not to sing, and dies. When we reverse the contents again, as we did before, we arrive at the following meaning: Hoffmann, the poet, vacillates between his love and his art, and he dies. In the sequence of the plot, Antonia is the last image of woman as she appears to the old man. Antonia is the figure of death. The three female figures appear to us now in a new light: Olympia as the representative of the mother, object of the love of the helpless and dependent little boy; Giulietta as the desired mistress of the grown man, Antonia as the personification of death which the old man is approaching.

It is at this point in our attempts at unraveling the hidden pattern of meaning behind Offenbach's opera, that the mental image of the composer himself emerges, shaded by the knowledge of his life story. Can it be incidental that he, already fatally ill, worked feverishly at this, his last opus which he hoped was going to be his best accomplishment? They called him then in Paris "Mozart of the Champs-Elysées." Mozart, his beloved and revered master, knew when he composed his *Requiem* that he would die soon. Offenbach, too, realized that his end was approaching. He put his full creative power into his work, and he died after it was completed like Antonia during her swan song. In the demoniac tunes of Dr. Mirakel are all the shudders of the approaching annihilation. All passionate longing for life and light is poured into the third act. Offenbach wrote to M. Carvallio, Director of the Paris Opera: "Hurry to produce my play. Not much time is left to me and I have only the one wish to see the opening performance." He knew he had to complete his work even if his efforts should accelerate his death. They did. He died a few months before the opening night. Like Antonia, he perished in his song.

It is not accidental that E. T. A. Hoffmann, the hero of the opera, was himself a musician as well as a poet. The identification of Offenbach with the figure of Antonia is also indicated in her passionate desire to become an artist like her mother, whose spirit exhorts her to sacrifice all to her singing. Offenbach's father was a singer in the synagogue and a composer of Jewish religious music.

The psychoanalytic interpretation here presented may seem forced to the reader unfamiliar with the methods of eliciting unconscious meanings. It will be helpful to point out that the symbolic significance here discovered is only a restatement in new form of an old

motif well known from numerous ancient myths and tales. It can be called the motif of the man and the three women, one of whom he has to choose. Freud gave the first psychoanalytic interpretation of this recurrent plot in one of his less known papers.[1] He deciphered the concealed meaning in the material of *Lear*, which Shakespeare had taken from older sources. The old king stands between his three daughters, of whom the youngest, Cordelia, is the most deserving. Goneril and Regan vie with each other in protestations of their affection for the father, but Cordelia "loves and is silent." In the last scene of the drama, Lear carries Cordelia, who is dead, across the stage. Freud elucidated the hidden significance of this scene by the process of reversal. It means, of course, the figure of death who carries away the body of old Lear, as the Valkyries carry off the slain hero. Traces of this original meaning can already he seen in the scene of Cordelia bending over her "childchanged father." As is frequently the case in dreams about persons dear to the dreamer, Cordelia's silence in itself signifies unconsciously that she is dead, that she is death itself in a mythical form.

The same motif, displaced, distorted and elaborated, appears in another one of Shakespeare's plays. The Portia scenes in *The Merchant of Venice* reveal to the interpretation of Freud an unexpected aspect. Portia will yield her hand to the man who, among three caskets, chooses the one which contains her picture. Here we encounter a hidden symbolism which we already know from Greek antiquity: boxes, chests and other receptacles are symbolic substitutes for the female body. In the Bassanio scene of the play, the motif of the man who has to choose between three women is thus expressed in symbolic form. Bassanio prefers the casket which is leaden to the gold and silver ones:

> . . . but thou, thou meager lead,
> Which rather threatenest, than dost promise aught.
> Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence.

The features of paleness, like silence in the case of Cordelia, appear frequently in dreams to signify that a figure is dead: persons who are deathly pale or who are voiceless represent dead persons or death itself. Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann* is a singer, it is true, but to

1 "Das Motif der Kästchenwahl," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. X.

sing is forbidden to her and it is her song which brings about her death, silences her forever. In unconscious productions, opposites may stand for each other, can replace each other. The secret similarities between the two Shakespearean plays become transparent: an old motif appears in the one in a tragic, in the other in a light version. What is in reality inevitable and preordained, namely, that in the end man has to yield to death, is here turned into a free choice. That which threatens is changed into wish fulfillment—a result itself of wishful thinking. There are hints which point to the original meaning, to the kind of a choice involved. ("Who chooses me must give and hazard all he hath," says the leaden casket, "which rather threatenest than dost promise aught," to Bassanio.)

Let me follow the old motif into the realm of the fairy tale where we meet with it frequently in its diverse forms, for instance, in the story of Cinderella who is the youngest of the sisters, and conceals herself. We can trace it farther back to the Erinyes, Parcae and Moirai, the goddesses of fate who are standing guard over individual destiny. The third figure among them is Atropos, who cut the thread of life. Corresponding to the Parcae are the Norse in Germanic mythology, who, too, are conceived as watching over human fate. They rule over gods and men alike, and from what is decreed by them neither god nor man can escape. Man's fate is determined by them at the hour of the child's birth, by what they say to the newborn infant. The word fate (*fatum*) itself, is derived from the same root as "word" or "that which is spoken." That what they say in magic words *is* a man's fate. Derived from the same Indo-German root, the word "fee" in modern German, the word "feie" in old French, and the Irish adjective fay, which is contained in fairy, all originally denoted goddesses of fate. In many fairy tales the fairies are represented as bringing gifts to a newborn infant. In most instances they appear as beneficent, as kind, lovely, well-wishing figures. But in some of the stories their original fatal character reemerges behind the benign aspect.

In conformity with the psychological law of the opposite which can replace one aspect by its protagonist in our unconscious thinking, the goddess of death sometimes appears under the aspect of the great goddess of love. In most ancient mythologies the same female figure has both functions like Kali in India, Ashtar with the Semitic tribes and Aphrodite with the Greeks. Yes, indeed, it is wishful

thinking which succeeded at last in transforming the most terrifying apparition into the desirable, the female figure of death into that of the beloved.

FIVE

We look back at Offenbach's opera: Olympia, Giulietta, Antonia. Here are three women in one, or one woman in three shapes: the one who gives birth, the one who gives sexual gratification, the one who brings death. Here are the three aspects woman has in a man's life: the mother, the mistress, the annihilator. The first and the last characters meet each other in the middle figure. In mythological and literary reactions, the representatives of love and of destruction can replace each other as in Shakespeare's plays, or they succeed each other as in Hoffmann's tales of thwarted love. In his three loves a reaction formation unfolds itself: the woman chosen appears in each beginning as the loveliest, most desirable object, and always, in the end, represents doom and death. It is as if her true character reveals itself only in the final scene. For as long as the reaction formation is in power, the most terrible appears as the most desirable.

Behind all these figures is originally a single one, just as in the triads of goddesses whom modern comparative history of religion has succeeded in tracing back to their prototype of one goddess. For all of us the mother is the woman of destiny. She is the *femme fatale* in its most literal sense, because she brought us into the world, she taught us to love, and it is she upon whom we call in our last hour. The mother as a death-dealing figure became alien to our conscious thinking. But she may become comprehensible in this function when death appears as the only release from suffering, as the one aim desired, the final peace. It is in this sense that dying soldiers call for their mothers. I can never forget a little boy who, in the agonies of a painful illness, cried, "Mother, you have brought me into the world, why can't you make me dead now?"

It is noteworthy that the motif of one man between three women appears in an earlier opera of Offenbach, who took an active part in the choice and shape of the libretto. *La Belle Hélène* uses a plot from Greek mythology: Paris, son of Priamos, has to choose between Athene, Hera and Aphrodite. The charming aria of the

mythological playboy says: "On Mount Ida three goddesses quarrelled in the wood. 'Which,' said the princesses, 'of us three is the fairest?' " Here, again, we have the motif of choosing, this time in a frivolous version. To the young ladies' man, Hera promises power and fame, Athene wisdom, but

> . . . the third, ah, the third
> The third remained silent.
> She gained the prize all the same.

Is it not strange that Aphrodite, the goddess of love, remains silent? She does not speak, yet she is eloquent. In the end the young prince chooses her, only it is not choice, it is necessity. She is not only the goddess of love, but also of death. *The Tales of Hoffmann* tell and sing the role of women in a man's life; that is to say, in every man's life.

SIX

I now remember when the melody that haunted me for several days first emerged. It was a week ago, on my way back from the Public Library. I had looked up something there. Before leaving I had seen on a desk a book which was a biography of Jacques Offenbach. I took it, looked at the composer's picture and ran over the pages, reading a paragraph here and there: the story of his childhood in Germany, his struggle and triumph in Paris, his way of composing, the feverish working on the score of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He had a presentiment he would not live to see the opening night of the opera. He felt the end was near. He died a few months after he had reached sixty-one.

Walking home through the streets that evening, I thought of the book I am working on, and a sudden anxiety overcame me that I would die before finishing it. It occurred to me that I had passed sixty-one a few months ago. And then the aria from *The Tales of Hoffmann* emerged and the unrecognized melody began to haunt me as if it wanted to remind me of something one would like to forget.

CHAPTER XV

Theme and Variations

ONE

MOST OF THE CHAPTERS of this book deal with thoughts conceived many years ago, and developed under the influence of new impressions or added observations of recent date. Some of that old material was kept only in the form of notes, of others a first draft was preserved in folders. A few pieces were finished in a provisional manner before they were put away.

After I recognized the melody that had haunted me as being Antonia's aria from *The Tales of Hoffmann,* I remembered with astonishment that this same tune had frequently occurred to me more than thirty years ago and that I had then written a paper on the unconscious content of Offenbach's opera. I found this piece in one of my folders and together with it a letter which Freud had written to me after he had read the article. His letter was dated March 24, 1918, and reads in part as follows: "I liked your Offenbach article very much. I think it is correct. Only in one part of your presentation, in tracing back Olympia to the mother image, you should have enlarged more freely and more fully and should have avoided giving the impression that you are fulfilling a prescribed task. You will perhaps rewrite that passage of your thoughtful contribution with your previous literary facility. With cordial thanks and regards, yours, Freud."

I rewrote that part and then put the manuscript away. It appears

here in the main part of the preceding chapter. It was noteworthy that the same melody emerged thirty years later and led my thoughts back to a subject which had preoccupied me such a long time before. That early draft was not written for the day. It must have originated in some deep, unrecognized emotions. It survived the day together with the emotions which continued to live in the unknown underground. It may have hovered at the brink of conscious memory before, but only the re-emergence of that melody brought it back from its submersion after I had reached sixty-one years, the age at which Offenbach died. It cannot be accidental that its essential part was written and given to Freud when he had passed his sixty-first year.

TWO

The jinx was off: unlike Jacques Offenbach, I did not die upon reaching my sixty-first year. Last winter I saw *The Tales of Hoffmann* once more, this time in the movies. It surprised me that during and after that performance my thoughts did not return to the hidden significance of the plot and its figures. It was as if writing that paper about the three women in a man's life had exhausted the emotional content of the subject for me. Or was it because there was so much to look at in the movie version that my attention was distracted?

At all events a conspicuous stage-set of the first act of the movie version turned my thought in a new direction. The scriptwriters went back to E. T. A. Hoffmann's novel *The Sandman*, from which the plot of the Olympia episode is taken, and gave much place and significance to the fabrication and acting of the marionettes. Not only was Olympia a puppet, but also the guests at her party. The figures of professor Spalanzani and of the optician Coppelius are shown in this movie at their common work of manufacturing the puppets. Spalanzani's home is not a dolls' house, but a workshop full of dolls.

After that performance a memory came to mind which I had never recalled before. Psychology still cannot satisfactorily explain why memories of previously unrecollected childhood happenings emerge with full vivacity in one's old age. It seems to me that such occurrence of events and impressions belonging to the remote past of the

individual are accompanied by a perceptible loss of emotional interest in the present. It is as if the diminution of the importance of actual situations facilitates a regression to earlier phases of one's life and gives them a heightened liveliness.

I had always believed the first theater performance I attended to have been *Orpheus in the Netherworld*. I clearly remembered that this had been a treat on my tenth birthday. The new memory, now emerging, revealed that I had been at a theater before that. I now recalled that a Moravian maid had taken me, then a small boy, to a puppet theater in the Prater and that I had enjoyed myself thoroughly. The marionette show was a fairy tale, and fairies and had demons struggled with each other over the hero of the show, which ended, of course, with the victory of good over evil. The puppets appeared to me full of life and power. They acted under their own will and were led to heroic actions or bad deeds by their own good or evil intentions. It did not disturb me in the least that they were pulled by very conspicuous strings. I then believed in free will as do only our lawgivers and educators who conveniently overlook that we all are pulled hither and thither by invisible strings.

To playwrights and actors, as well as to women and children, the theater is so much nearer to material life than to us disenchanted realists. A patient remembered in his analysis that as a small boy he believed that going to the theater meant climbing up to the roofs of certain buildings on Broadway and standing up there during an evening. This strange idea had a simple origin in the thoughts of the child. When his parents took him on a walk, they sometimes talked of theaters and actors and referred to billboards on which new plays were announced high up on the houses of Broadway as they passed by. The boy also saw on these posters pictures of actors in wooden frames and the electrified letters of their names. What was more natural than to assume that his parents went up there when they announced to him that they were going to the theater?

It seems that these childhood convictions remain undisturbed and are as indifferent to the views of grownups as a Siamese cat is to the opinions of people around him. From that puppet show I must have conceived the idea that the theater was something like a palace of fairies, and the plot a fairy tale, not acted but brought alive. A remnant of this old concept of the stage as the meeting and matching place of superhuman forces has remained with me. The strings on

which the puppets were pulled became invisible. They have been transformed into those threads by which the forces of destiny lead the figures to their destination.

In the tracks of this old concept, I was not astonished when I was told before my tenth birthday that I would see the gods and heroes of Greek antiquity at a performance of *Orpheus in the Netherworld*. The Greek and Roman gods had taken the place of sorcerers, fairies and evil demons in my fantasies as they did in the real evolution of religious beliefs. My interest had shifted from the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and Andersen to the figures of the ancient mythology, to the sagas and myths whose figures were to be seen in the colored illustrations of a book, *The Most Beautiful Sagas of Ancient Mythology* by Gustav Schwab. I knew all the tales about Jupiter, Pluto, Mars, Venus and Styx and, of course, Orpheus and Eurydice, whom I would now see on the stage, and I looked forward to meeting them in the flesh because the theater still appeared to me as illustrations come to life, as *tableaux vivants*. I have often asked myself since whether it is much more.

Thus, for me, the theater was a continuation of that puppet show seen as a small boy. There must have been, however, a psychological justification for my so long mistakenly believing that *Orpheus in the Netherworld* was the first show I had attended. It seems that the puppet show had been disavowed and forgotten because it was "kid stuff." But here was real theater, the place where adults go. The boy at the progressed age of ten years looked down contemptuously on the puppet show of his early childhood. It was strange that the memory of it emerged after that movie performance of *The Tales of Hoffmann* in which Olympia and her guests are marionettes. Perhaps an accidental impression facilitated the occurrence of this memory: leaving the theater and crossing Broadway, I saw high up on a building a poster on which another play was announced in electrified letters. Its title was *Guys and Dolls*.

THREE

Some months after this performance in the movies, I found in a folder two old yellowed sheets on which I had written some notes. Some of them were hardly legible. They were not dated, but their

content, after having been deciphered, showed that they must have been jotted down when I was thinking of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, which means before 1918 when I gave Freud the manuscript of my paper. The notes of the first sheet already contained the outline of the concept I later worked out in my draft, but on the second were some words which to my great surprise pointed to an idea I had dropped or brushed aside when I wrote that manuscript early in 1918. The notes said: Olympia, Giulietta, Antonia, originally one woman-figure—the early pattern is Eurydice in *Orpheus in the Netherworld*—the revolution of the gods against Jupiter—death as punishment—Offenbach and Jehovah—Carl Blasel.

The last name brought back an abundance of memories of that performance on my tenth birthday. Carl Blasel was then a well-known Viennese comedian who sang and acted the part of Jove in that matinee. I still know that I connected the name of Blasel with his figure because the German word *aufblasen* means blow up, and the funny, obese old man was very fit to act as the helpless Jove in Offenbach's parodistic presentation.

Out of the submersion of almost fifty-four years, as from a trap door on a stage, his comical figure appeared in my mind, and I saw him as he emerged with all mythological attributes including the lightning as Jupiter amongst the gods who revolt against him. They are sick to death of sipping ambrosia and nectar and wish to drink champagne. I seem to hear that revolutionary song of the Olympians into which Offenbach skillfully inserted some bars of that other revolutionary tune, the *Marseillaise*. And by God!—or rather by Jove!—I remembered all of a sudden after fifty-four years, the exact words of indignant Jupiter which did not appear, of course, in the libretto of the operetta, but were improvised and were pronounced in a broad Viennese dialect:

No wart's, ihr Mordsbagage,
Ihr gebt's mir noch ka Ruah!
Ich zahl euch keine Gage
Und sperr den Himmel zua.

You bums, no peace by night and day!
If you don't stop this uproar,
I'll give you no more pay
And close up Olympus' store.

Of course, I enjoyed that scintillating music, but I was much more fascinated by the debunking and parodying of the gods and half-gods of ancient Greece. Only later I learned to appreciate the "supreme form of wit" (Nietzsche's praising words) of the composer who expresses his travesty in music itself, as for instance in that solemn hymn in praise of Jupiter which suddenly jumps into that exuberant cancan, that *galop infernal* of all gods. Much later I also began to understand that my extreme enjoyment of the mythological caricature introduced a phase of revolution against religion and tradition in my young life. The appearance of annoyed Jove in the middle of the outrage of gods represented a substitute memory of my father appearing in the nursery, extremely annoyed by the turmoil and noise we children made. That phase of rebellion against authority lasted to the end of puberty. I still remember that the mockery of the Greek and Roman gods and half-gods was followed by the debunking of the heroes of the German sagas in whom the boy had been interested for a short time. As the degradation and desecration of the figures of Greek mythology is connected in my mind with the performance of *Orpheus in the Netherworld*, the mockery and the debunking of the gods and heroes of Valhalla is tied to another operetta seen much later. It is *The Merry Nibelungs* by Oskar Straus, the composer who, later on, wrote *A Waltz Dream* and *The Chocolate Soldier*. In that early operetta, Straus parodies Wagner's operas, as Offenbach occasionally did Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*. (Did not Wagner say about Offenbach as a composer, "Yes, he has warmth, the warmth of a manure heap"?) Oskar Straus, who follows, in *The Merry Nibelungs*, Offenbach's pattern of witty parody, must have recognized early the shame and nonsense of that racial glorification which was introduced by the Wagner cult and culminated in the Nazi terror.

While I am writing this, some of the enjoyment of that travesty comes back to mind with the memory of some lines which proclaim that the Nibelungen treasure was not hidden at the bottom of the Rhine, but invested at the Rhine Bank at 6 per cent. The images of Siegfried, Gunther and Hagen, of Kriemhild and her mother Utah, of all those Teutonic knights emerge together with some bars of Straus's witty music. I am humming the aria of Siegfried after he had killed the dragon and dipped into its blood:

I have taken a bath
Too soon after I did sup,
It didn't agree with me
I don't feel freshened up.

Or that other tune:

And how about Lady Utah?
She has not much to brag on,
Master Siegfried becomes her son-in-law
Who isn't afraid of any dragon.

The chorus sings:

So war's bei den Germanen
Seit alters Brauch,
So taten's unsre Ahnen
Und wir tun's auch.

That's a dear German custom
From early ages through,
Thus acted our ancestors
And thus we act too.

And this whole sordid mixture of *"Kraft durch Freude"* (in the tortures of Poles and Jews), of heroism and moronism, of bravery and depravity which that operetta shows as already present in the ancient Teutons appears now as a prophetic vision of the horrible things to come some thirty years later. The light and parodistically dancing tunes of the Straus operetta are relieved in my mind by the orgiastic cancan of Offenbach, by that irresistible galop which, according to a contemporary critic, could "awaken the dead."

Tearing the mask from the face of an age in which, as in our own, all vices hide behind the hypocrisy of decency and moralistic integrity, Offenbach's riotous and exuberant tunes bravely proclaimed enjoyment of life and made fun of all that official show of chastity, honesty and patriotism. They have a satanic spirit, those tunes, a *beauté de diable*. An American colloquialism says "ugly as sin." But sin is not only tempting, it is also very attractive. They should say "ugly as virtue."

FOUR

The children of the Jewish ghetto have very few occasions to see pictures. In extension of the Biblical commandment forbidding the making of images of God, the religious Jews do not permit illustrations of the figures of the Holy Scripture. There is really only one exception—the Haggadah, the book in which the tales of the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt is told and which is recited at the festival of Passover. Here is the tale of the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt and of their miraculous salvation from Pharaoh's cruel oppression. There are also some very primitive pictures of these events in the old book.

There is an anecdote about how the first religious douhts awakened in a little boy who grew up in the pious atmosphere of a Russian ghetto. The child saw the picture of Moses in the desert in the Haggadah. The drawing showed the great lawgiver of Israel dressed as a Russian Jew, since the medieval artists gave the persons of the Bible the costumes of their times. After having looked long at the picture, the boy asked the Rabbi, "Why is Moses wearing a fur cap in the hot desert?" With this little problem began the child's douht of the truth of the religious tradition.

As far as I can remember, my first doubt of the Jewish faith is also connected with the Haggadah, not with one of its pictures, but with one of the songs which is recited there. My father was an agnostic, but my grandfather was a fanatically religious man who demanded that we children attend the Jewish festivals. On the evening of the Passover meals the Haggadah was read aloud and also the traditional song was sung. It is called *Had Gadja* and is a kind of long nursery-rhyme tale. Its story is that a father purchased little kid—two pieces were the prize—and that the cat came and ate the kid. Then came the dog who bit the cat, the stick came and hit the dog, the fire burned the stick, the water quenched the fire. Then came the ox and drank the water. The slaughterer killed the ox, hut then came the angel of death and killed the slaughterer. The Most Holy (God) destroyed the angel of death who slew the slaughterer that killed the ox that drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kidling, which "my father bought for two doggerel zuzim." As a

child, I repeatedly heard that old Aramaic song, translated into German and chanted in the traditional style of synagogical cantillation. It illustrates the age-old law of retribution, the *ius talionis* as it appears in the laws of the ancient Orient. There are traditions that this *Had Gadja* is a symbolical presentation of the destiny awaiting the enemies of the chosen people.

My doubts started at the first verses, to which I returned in my childish thoughts after the recital of that stanza which was concerned with the first victim. If God was powerful enough to destroy the angel of death, why did he allow the cat to eat the poor kidling for which I felt sorry? Could he not have prevented that first murder? There I hegan to doubt the omnipotence of the Lord. My doubt continued until I realized that His omnipotence is infinite.

Not only the content, but also the tune of that song aroused my attention. At this time the little boy used to ask who had "manufactured" this or that melody he liked. He imagined, it seems, that tunes were made, manufactured like toys, in a mechanical, artificial way—an assumption which is correct only for the most modern compositions. He was interested in the name of the composer of melodies he had enjoyed, because names say much more about people to children than to adults. Children connect definite ideas with names which they do not yet separate from the person himself, but which they consider a significant and inherent quality of the individual. The name of the composer of the *Had Gadja*, thus my father told me, was Jacques Offenbach and he was a very famous man. For a long time I believed that the composer of *La Belle Hélène* and *Orphée aux enfers* had also been the author of that song, *A kidling*. I learned only much later that Jacques's father, Isaac Offenbach, who had been cantor of the synagogue of Koeln, had composed the strange song that proclaimed the eternal law of retribution in a solemn tune which sometimes struck me as almost parodistic.

When Jacques Offenbach wittily mocked the Greek and Roman gods, he unconsciously made fun of his father as well, and of the moral and religious values of the tradition in which he had grown up. Yes, it is very likely that some of the satiric attitude he felt toward that traditional code of his Jewish environment was displaced to the Greek gods and heroes of antiquity, whom he made subjects of his superb mockery.

Yet he had never got rid of unconscious feelings of devotion and

respect for those old values. In the celebrated composer, in the world-famous musician whose tunes reflect the spirit of Paris, of the mundane Second Empire and of the frivolity of the time of Napoleon III, a Jewish boy who had sung in the choir of his father's synagogue at Koeln continued a subterranean life. Is it accident that in his arias there occur so many reminiscences of the synagogical tunes he had heard there in his childhood? In the great aria of Styx, in *Orpheus in the Netherworld*, "*Quand j' étais roi de Boétie*," a typical bit of Jewish liturgic music appears as the end. The Barcarolle of *The Tales of Hoffmann* reminds the hearer in some of its bars of melodies of the synagogue. There is even a suggestion of that old song *A kidling*, which his father, the cantor of Koeln, had composed in a tune of *Une Nuit Blanche*.

The Jew-boy who went to Paris to study music when he was thirteen years old, and who later spoke French with a German accent and German with a French one, the destructive *moqueur* who had such an excellent sense for the incongruities of life and such sharp wit directed against tradition, remained ambivalent toward it. That revolutionary spirit was also conservative.

FIVE

When the ten-year-old boy saw *Orpheus in the Netherworld*, he was mostly interested in the mythological figures whom the composer and the librettist had treated so disrespectfully. I am sure he did not understand many things, misunderstood others and paid no attention to certain aspects of the plot. I heard the other day that a boy of this age came home from a movie whose title promised scenes from the wild West, and answered, when asked whether he enjoyed himself, "It was a waste of looking. It was full of love and such stuff." Like this boy, I was neither interested in nor amused by the love affairs of the gods.

The figure who interested me most was Orpheus, the only mortal amongst the Olympians. I had read about him in my book of mythology and I had often looked at his picture in it, which showed the master musician playing the lyre, surrounded by wild animals whom he had tamed by his sweet strains, and by rocks and trees he could move by the power of his tunes. I knew also that he had descended

to the Netherworld to get his wife Eurydice, who had died, that he had returned without her and that the bacchantes had torn him to pieces during a Dionysiac orgy. His figure aroused admiration and pity in the boy.

I understood that in Offenbach's travesty no love is lost between Orpheus and Eurydice. I understood less well that public opinion compelled the great musician to follow his wife, whom he detested, into Hades. "I would not do that," I thought as a boy (and I think so now as an old man). "I would not die. To hell with public opinion!" Even before this I felt a kind of antipathy against Eurydice. She despises her husband as an artist and she dislikes hearing him play.

The violinist
Is very triste,

she says, and is terrified when he wants to play for her his recent concerto, which will last only one hour and a quarter. The humor of that scene was entirely lost on me. There was another feature that disturbed me: Eurydice changes at the finale into one of the bacchantes and sings a hymn in praise of Bacchus, that ecstatic and wild song:

Evohé! Bacchus inspires me!

Was she one of the bacchantes who tore the marvelous musician limb from limb? Was she a member of that ferocious cult of Thracian women who killed the great singer? Did she kill him herself? There was, it seemed, a confusion in the writer's mind—or was it in my own?

Looking back at that performance, I wonder why the numerous anachronisms in the dialogue did not disturb me in the least. Jupiter, Styx and the other gods spoke genuine Viennese dialect, and made numerous jokes about Vienna local events or situations in their improvised lines. I took that in my stride and was not astonished that the Olympians spoke the language of my native town. There was, however, a tiny detail that annoyed me: Orpheus played the violin. I played then the violin myself—miserably enough—and I should have been attracted by the brother-musician, but I was disappointed. It was certainly not because of the anachronistic nature of this feature. I was annoyed because I expected to hear Orpheus play the cithara, that ancient instrument somewhat like a lyre. Be-

fore he appeared on the stage, I looked forward to seeing him with this instrument as he was pictured in my mythology book. I cannot be positive whether I was just curious to see what a cithara looked like or whether I expected that I would listen to some miraculous music. I had heard plenty of violin music in my young life, but never a cithara.

Looking back from a distance of fifty-four years at that stranger, that boy who was I, I know his main impressions at that performance were a very intense enjoyment of Offenbach's music and of his travesty of the gods, compassion for the figure of Orpheus and a distinct antagonism against Eurydice whom—I don't know why—I held somehow responsible for the fact that the divine singer had to die.

SIX

How rich is life in childhood and how impoverished it becomes in old age! For the boy to whom the world unfolds, all is full of colors and sounds, life and movement, all new and interesting. How little of that remains when the shadows become larger, how cool and remote one's own life and that of others appear! You look at it as if from a far distance, as through the diminishing lens of binoculars.

A German writer, Jean Paul Richter, wrote more than one hundred and fifty years ago that memory is the only paradise from which we cannot be expelled. But it gets lost and is not often regained. We return to it in psychoanalysis when we remember early childhood impressions and events. But such memories surprisingly turn up outside the analytic treatment as well, when one gets old. Those memories of a very remote past occur then in a sudden flash, or they appear in a slow process of re-emergence that can even be observed on rare occasions, as in this instance. It is as if buckets are slowly raised from a deep well that has held them for a long time, and now they are sent up to the surface, filled with cool and refreshing water.

The preceding paragraphs form a too lengthy introduction to the main theme, a long runway, as it were, for a short flight. I rambled on about my childhood, the theater performance and that Passover song, *Had Gadja*. How will I find the way back to *The Tales of Hoffmann*? But I have never turned away from it in my thoughts, because numerous threads run from those memories to the opera in my mind. I need only pick them up and define them.

There is, of course, the personality of the composer. It is the same man who near the end of his life shaped the destiny of E. T. A. Hoffmann, who in his middle age wrote the travesty of the Orpheus myth and who, as I mistakenly believed when I was a boy, composed that Jewish song which in a nursery-rhyme manner presents the ancient law that the killer will be killed, the cat, the dog, the stick, the fire, the water, the ox, the slaughterer, the angel of death.

It is odd that the detail in the performance of *Orpheus in the Netherworld* that irked me as a boy of ten—namely, that the musician plays the violin instead of the lyre—now becomes a psychological clue. It is possible (more than this, it is likely) that the substitution of the violin for the lyre was necessitated by musical and theatrical reasons, that the fiddle replaced the ancient instrument because the tunes of the violin were more effective than those of the antique cithara. But beside and beyond these considerations, there is the fact that the violin (and later on the violoncello) was the instrument on which Offenbach excelled. As a young child, he played the violin well, and he went to Paris when he was thirteen to study violoncello. Yes, he played as a solist on this instrument in several concertos. Orpheus, playing the violin, represents the creator of that music, the composer himself. In a kind of self-persiflage, Offenbach demonstrates a potentiality of his own destiny in the figure of that mythological musician.

What destiny? Well, when you peel the comical and mythological covers from the plot and strip it to the essentials, there remains the story of an ambitious musician and composer who is thwarted in his profession and in his love life, dies and goes to Hades. But is this not, raised from the level of fun-making to that of the tragic, the destiny of E. T. A. Hoffmann in Offenbach's last work? There the three demoniac figures of Spalanzani, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel defeat the young musician and deprive him by a trick of his sweetheart as Jupiter does Orpheus. The Olympian god is here replaced by the three figures representing a mysterious and malicious antagonist with magical powers.

And Eurydice? Does she not appear at first as a spoiled child-woman like Olympia, then as a heartless bacchantic adventuress like the wanton Giulietta, and at the end like the ecstatically singing Antonia? Is she not a figure representing lust and death, as are those women in the opera? Here the three women are reduced to *one* fatal

figure. Here is the primal image of death which later on reappeared in a veiled form in Antonia because Eurydice is dead and it is in search of her that Orpheus descends to the Netherworld, to Hades, which is easily to be understood as the symbolical expression of his own death. As in our interpretation of the Antonia-figure, we recognize in the mythological formation of Eurydice the threat of death for the man.

In the tale of Orpheus is the germ of what later on became the tale of Hoffmann. Here, as there, is the story of thwarted love, of frustrated ambition, of the expectancy of the end that is near. But in the early work all somber and fateful figures are dressed up in a gay mythological costume as at a fancy-dress ball, and they appear as butts of jokes and pranks. (By the way, Hoffmann is also the subject of mockery by the students in the tavern where he tells the story of his three frustrated amours.) The same fateful development that was first presented as funny will be seen as a tale of gloom and of defeat when the end draws near. Frustrated love, thwarted ambition —one's life as failure. Orpheus and Hoffmann, Eurydice and Antonia—they are the same figures seen in a comic light at first, and as tragic at the end. When the end is near, their composer gathers up all his energies, summons up all his musical power to achieve what had been his hidden aim, to express the best that's in him, all that is his inner self—before he goes down to Hades. He will show his adversaries what he can accomplish, if it is the last thing he does. It was.

The observer who follows with analytic attention the creative stream of Offenbach's imagination will find that the secret main theme remains the same in *Orphée aux enfers*, in *La Belle Hélène* and in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. When the trimmings are stripped away, the identical motif of love and death is discernible in these changing forms. There are rivers that disappear in the ground, flow on subterraneously for many miles and re-emerge very far away from their previous place. Yet, it is the same river.

Psychoanalysis enables us not only to interpret those different formations and to recognize their concealed meaning, but also to demonstrate the continuity of the emotional trends in so many varieties of shapes. Out of the darkness of unconscious processes emerges a distinct figuration, and all the threads that had been torn are tied together again.

CHAPTER XVI

Tuneful Paradoxes

ONE

WHY ARE WE sometimes attacked by a sad melody when we are in a serene mood or in high spirits? And why should a very gay tune pursue us in the middle of a depressed or even desperate mood? Are we playthings of unknown forces that impose their capricious will on us? We who are otherwise able to determine the course of our thoughts, and who are accustomed to call the tune, are suddenly subjected to the irresistible power of an anonymous agent. Here the tune calls us.

The origin and the motives of such paradoxical melodies have not yet been discussed, but are well worthy of psychological attention. I would like to trace them back to the dark domain from which they surprisingly emerged. I do not hesitate to attribute representative significance to the two following examples of this kind. The first of them is taken from psychoanalytic practice, the second from recent self-observation.

At the time of the experience first reported, the patient had made good progress in his analytic treatment. He had cause to feel happy: he had regained self-confidence with the help of analysis, called himself lucky because the young girl he had married loved him, and

his professional work had been successful. A few weeks before, a speculation on the Stock Exchange had taken a lucky turn and had secured some unexpected comfort for the life of the young couple. One evening he felt in a specially good mood when he reflected on the fact that everything was going his way. He caught himself whistling and was surprised to discover that the theme that had come to his lips was a somber passage from Tschaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. The oppressive bars imposed themselves on his thoughts during the following hours, and recurred to him again in his analytic session in which he spoke of his good luck.

The surprising emergence of that plaintive motif always affected the patient as very oppressive. It now turned his mood in a somber direction and filled him with a feeling of impending calamity. Similar changes of a cheerful mood into depression had already been observed by the patient himself. This experience was conspicuous to him because the emergence of the sudden depression was introduced and accompanied by an inner musical perception that began to haunt him. In cases like this, the change of mood is analytically understandable when the initial feeling of well-being, of happiness or triumph is conceived not only as the turning point, but also as the cause of the turning. In the middle of a happy or joyous mood, a wave of depression from unknown depths reaches the emotional surface. At the core of that negative emotion is an unconscious guilt feeling that surprisingly intrudes into the glorious sphere of the moment. That guilt feeling conveys to the person: You do not deserve to be happy or successful. It announces silently but eloquently the presence and operation of the force of conscience. It is as if it warns the person not to feel happy and not to feel secure in his luck, which is threatened by the work of unknown agents.

Some data from the history of the patient's life may help to understand the emotional situation and the surprising reversal of his mood. As a child, he was considered a nice little boy who, in contrast with his older brother, was always obedient and well behaved. His brother began to drink at an early age, was expelled from school and eventually became the black sheep of the family, while the younger brother was praised by parents and teachers alike. As a boy, the patient had enjoyed the satisfaction of being held up as a pattern of good behavior to his older brother, whose daring and insolence he secretly admired and toward whom he was resentful because he was

bossed by him. When the last war began, the "bad" brother joined the air corps as a pilot, and was killed during the first year after America's entrance into the world conflict. The patient consciously experienced a moment of gratification when the news of his brother's death arrived, to be followed in the next hours by grief and mourning. During the following years he rarely thought of his brother with affection or sorrow, but was only aware that he was now his parents' only heir and the only object of their love. Yet the power of those unconscious moral trends showed itself later on, in just those moments when he felt great satisfaction or when he was on the threshold of success. The depression that emerged, at these times, and often puzzled him, seemed to have no reason; it appeared like a mysterious reaction, but could not easily be shaken off. It conveyed a message that, translated into the language of conscious thinking, would say in effect: You are not allowed to feel satisfied or successful; your brother died and made room for you. Each satisfaction about a stroke of luck unconsciously reminded him of that evil satisfaction he had felt with the news of his brother's death.

The emergence of that sad theme in the thoughts of the patient just when he felt cheerful is, thus, a musical expression of the breakthrough of an unconscious emotion. The upsurge of sudden mourning amounts to a moral reaction. It does not occur in spite of the gay mood, but because of it.

The melody from the second movement of Tschaikovsky's symphony came to the patient's mind as a thought formed in sounds. It was difficult to find why just these strains crossed his mind. The patient guessed that the "musical association" was perhaps determined by the fact that, earlier, he had glanced at the evening newspaper and had read there about the menace of a Third World War in which the Soviet Union would be the aggressor. While reading those lines, the memory of the other war, in which his brother was killed, was awakened. More important perhaps than this thought connection is the fact that the plaintive motif from the Russian composer's symphony had often before affected the patient as an expression of mourning. In the emergence of those depressing bars, that secret guilt feeling is more decisive than the associative process. The sudden emergence of that unconscious emotion, to be compared with the surprise attack of enemies hidden in ambush, brings about the change of mood and with it the arrival of that somber

melody in the patient's mind. Put into this psychological context, the phenomenon of that haunting melody which seems to be so contrary to the man's conscious well-being loses almost all of its mysterious character. It is reduced to that of an unconscious reminder in musical form or of a negative reaction that protests by means of a melody against a happy mood which dominates the emotional surface.

TWO

The material of the second example is taken from an inner experience that was self-observed and analyzed recently. I had been very depressed after some rather temperamental scenes with my two daughters. I had expressed my dissatisfaction with Theodora, who has still not decided what she wants to study and who has attended college classes on subjects as divergent as Kierkegaard's writings, the forms of democratic government, mathematics and the history of French tragedy. Theodora, now nineteen years old, had reacted to my criticism with all the energy of an independent girl who knows her mind or knows at least that she has a mind. I had reproached Miriam because she smokes and sometimes stays out to all hours, even during the week when she has to get up early in the morning to go to school. It worries me that she has too little sleep and looks badly. She is only fourteen years old, but it seems I have no authority any more, and she puts her will against mine. Both girls reacted defiantly to my recriminations. They behaved rebelliously, and we had a violent argument during which they yelled at me.

Thinking of those scenes that had taken place yesterday, I became increasingly sad when trying to fall asleep. My mood turned quickly from one in which I was accusing my daughters and feeling sorry for myself into one of self-abasement. I seemed still to hear the excited, raised voices of the two girls when they argued with me. Going over the events of yesterday, I first blamed them in my thoughts, then my wife who has been ill for so many years, the mistakes of progressive education and only at the end myself. No one is responsible but I. I have failed them; I must have made serious mistakes in their upbringing. I could not blink any longer at the fact that I am a total failure as an educator because the sorry results of my failure glared in my face. The girls would not have behaved

as they did if I had educated them better, if I had given more attention to their development at home and outside the home. I felt very unhappy. All my guilt.

I was sinking into an abyss of melancholy thoughts and I could not fall asleep. The campaign I carried on against myself threatened to end in full defeat and despair when I suddenly caught myself humming a very cheerful melody. In the next moment I recognized it as a tune from the operetta *Countess Maritza* by Emerich Kalman. The melody went on and on in my mind like a record that one has forgotten to turn off. This comparison that had crossed my brain reminded me that I had heard a record of the operetta last week when I was a guest at K.'s. Frequently, in the last years, there had been excerpts from *Maritza* on Station WQXR, but this was the first time I had heard the whole work since I attended its opening night in Vienna. (Was it in 1923 or 1924?) Since my visit at that hospitable house, some melodic gems from Kalman's operetta had come to mind, and I had whistled the slow waltz and some tuneful arias, enjoying their sensual charm. (I had also been amused by the lyrics which are almost moronic and occasionally come close to the character of the word salad of schizophrenics. The mechanics of rhyme compulsions produce lines like those of the song:

Komm mit nach Warasdin
Solange noch die Rosen blüh'n!

What a pity that one cannot remember that scintillating tune without being irked by the simultaneous memory of such idiotic lyrics! It is as if a girl sings a melodious song with the first line:

Come with me to Riverdale
Where flowers are on sale.

The geographical reference of that line is as meaningless as that of the intellectual gem:

Bongo, Bongo, Bongo,
I don't want to leave the Congo.

Did not Nietzsche once write that what is too stupid to be said is to be sung?)

When that vivid, bubbling tune chased me, I realized that it is a children's choir because I clearly remembered having heard children's voices sing the lines that were not recollected. They were certainly not important, were perhaps as nonsensical as most of the other lyrics of the operetta.

The playful strains recurring again and again followed me to the threshold of sleep. When I woke, my thoughts picked up the threads of thoughts of yesterday, those melancholy reflections on my daughters and my educational failure. But in the next minute that cheerful children's choir emerged again and intruded into my next thoughts. Together with that vivid tune the first words of the children's song had come back. They were two girls' names, "Julinka, Rosika," which are Hungarian diminutives of Julia and Rose. The re-emergence of the tune seemed again to have the effect that my sad mood receded and gave way to a more hopeful, energetic one. Since my melancholy thoughts had concerned my two daughters and their future, this change of mood indicated, obviously enough, that the children's choir must also have referred to them. As psychological circumstantial evidence, there could he added that from the text only two girls' names had come to mind. When the vivid melody recurred, I remembered that I had enjoyed the silver-clear, pure voices when I had listened to the record of the operetta.

There was no doubt in my mind any longer that the melody of the children's choir that had haunted me since the evening before had an unconscious significance. I must have turned from sad thoughts about my daughters and the unsatisfying present to the past, when the two girls were still children. The emergence of that playful song was thus the musical expression of a flight into the past, and indicated the arrival of happy memories when Theodora and Miriam were still small girls and sang children's songs with playmates at home or in Central Park. Hearing the children's choir in the recorded music of Kalman's *Maritza* must have brought back such unconscious memories, memories to which I, without being aware of it, must have returned when I had felt sad and grieved by my daughters, now grown up. That children's choir had called up the happy time when Theodora's and Miriam's voices, which had sounded so shrill in our recent arguments, had still the charming qualities of clear childish singing. With that unconscious memory a change of mood was introduced.

The depression, or rather the guilt feeling, that had been at its core had brought about a decrease of self-esteem. Self-reproaches about my failures in education had weakened my self-confidence to a considerable extent. At the roots of my sad mood was the awareness that I had failed my daughters, but, perhaps deeper than that, the impression that I had failed generally. This self-torturing guilt feeling must have reached a certain point of saturation, that is, a degree at which the ego had turned against self-reproaches or remorse as exaggerated and had attempted to regain the lost self-esteem. At this point the guilt feeling was overcome or mastered, and my self-confidence returned.

The turning point for the change of mood was the unconscious memory of the time when both my daughters had been happy and affectionate little girls who bad played and sung together. The children's choir from *Maritza*, heard only a short time before, lent itself to a musical expression of that unconscious memory.

Comparison of my patient's and my own experience leads to the recognition that the loss and the regaining of unconscious self-esteem were the most important factors in the change of moods. There, as here, the intensity of guilt feeling determined whether the ego became much weakened or maintained its strength against those dark powers of conscience. In both cases the transition from one mood to the other was heralded by the emergence of a musical memory that screened other memories of an emphasized emotional character. We avoid at this point the temptation of entering into a discussion of the unconscious trends that connect such normal alterations of moods with those observed in the manic-depressive states. The other interesting problem, namely, the tracing of minor and major to emotions akin to depression and mania, has to be left to the attention of psychiatrists who are also excellent musicians and theoreticians of musical phenomena.

At the end of this contribution to the psychopathology of the haunting melody, it should be added that the emergence of the children's choir in my thoughts had not only the secret meaning of remembering happier days in the past. The transition from sadness to a more cheerful mood proves that with a regained self-esteem a more hopeful and optimistic outlook for the future of my daughters also announced itself. I must have unconsciously comforted myself with the thought that the two girls had a carefree and happy child-

hood and with it a solid foundation for their future life. I had done my best, however poor that may have been, to make their early years cheerful.

The emergence of the children's voices in my thoughts had consoled and comforted me. It seemed to reassure me that the girls will overcome their present emotional difficulties and will again be happy as they were when they were children.

Beneath all that nonsense and rebelliousness of adolescence there is a core intact. They are good children who will always be decent and kind-hearted. The lively melody of the children's choir had resounded in me as unconscious consolation in those dark hours. Only a faint echo was audible in my thoughts and was finally dismissed, to be replaced by aim-directed and rational thinking. At the end it was as if a familiar voice wanted to encourage me when from a dust-covered corner of my memory some lines from Goethe's *Faust* appeared in my mind:

> *Wenn sich der Most auch ganz absurd gebärdet,*
> *Er gibt zuletzt doch 'nen Wein.*

After a stormy scene with a very temperamental young man, Mephisto expresses in those lines the conviction that the youth will change:

> . . . ere a few years have passed.
> Though must within the keg behaves absurdly
> It turns to wine no less at last.

The analytic exploration of those two cases of haunting melodies proves, it seems to me, that the reverberating tunes have more than the secret significance of memories. In their repetitions they fulfill a purifying, cathartic function calling up dark emotions which cannot be verbalized. Like those friends in Robert Schumann's *Davidsbündler,* we try in vain to give others an appropriate idea of what we have felt in past experiences. The members of that imaginary romantic society once spoke of many sad and cheerful things. "Then soft tunes sounded from Florestan's room; the friends became quiet and quieter when they recognized the sonata. But when Florestan stopped, the master said: 'And now no word more!' "

PART THREE

The Haunting Melody

CHAPTER XVII

The Unknown Self Sings

ONE

WHEN ONE LOOKS back on an experience after a few decades, it is as if it were not a part of one's own life, but that of another person. Grillparzer let his Jason in *Medea* say:

> When I tell myself the tale of my life,
> It is as if someone else would speak,
> and I would listen
> And interrupt him: "Friend, that can't be."

Little else makes you realize so clearly that you have changed and become another person as the recollection of how you felt, of what you wished and feared many years before. You think, moreover, you know that you would feel very differently today, but how is it possible that you once felt as you did? Under certain circumstances this astonishment can lead to the wish to understand that other self which has been lost or survives only in the dim light of memories, to see it resurrected in recollection in order to recognize its nature. It is this curiosity that propels some people to undertake a voyage of discovery into that dark continent, the self.

The following paragraphs will report an inner experience which, considered in itself, would be utterly trivial and insignificant, were it not that it is an intriguing object of psychological research. To

keep that experience in its proper dimensions in its presentation is not an easy task. It is seen from a distance of twenty-seven years which explains why the figures appear minute, the emotions of that time petty and remote, alien to me. It is as if you were looking at the stage through the diminishing end of binoculars. As soon as the experience is put into the frame of my emotional development, its shape and significance seem to increase. Seen from psychoanalytic points of view, it reveals that forgotten or lost self.

I shall attempt to keep the report of that experience free from the insights into its meaning I gained much later and to describe it in a matter-of-fact manner. I can do this more easily since at the time I jotted down a description of the experience in word clues that would remind me of its essential features later on. The sheets on which those notes were written were preserved through the many years since, and serve me now as a valid document and valuable help. It was this very experience that really led to the writing of this book on psychoanalysis and music. The general problems here presented originated in that single experience whose emotional significance had been submerged. Its repercussions became clear in the same manner as wide circles show themselves on the surface around the place where a stone has been thrown into the water and has sunk to the depth.

The presentation of the facts must be introduced by a preliminary report. In December, 1925, I felt unusually tired and weary, fed up with daily analytic practice. I decided to get a week of recreation and to spend the vacation between Christmas and New Year's on the Semmering. This is a summer and winter resort, about three hours' train ride from Vienna, high up in the mountains. There are quite a few hotels, and my family and I had enjoyed the clear and sharp mountain air of the place before. We spent Christmas evening at a hotel we had stopped at on previous occasions. On the evening of December 25 I received a telephone call from Vienna. A colleague told me the sad news that Karl Abraham had died, and he asked me in the name of Freud to deliver a speech in memory of our friend at the next meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. I shall say more about the personality of Dr. Abraham later on. It will be sufficient to insert here that I had been in training psychoanalysis with him more than ten years before, and that he had been not only an admired master, but also had later become my friend.

The first reaction after hearing about his death was intense shock. The news hit me unprepared. I thought he had completely recovered from the serious illness from which he had suffered since spring. A few months before, at the end of the summer, I had visited him and he seemed to be all right. We had discussed some projects of analytic research in which we were both interested.

The reaction of shock lasted only a few minutes, and then I felt strangely numb. I tried to recall my last meeting with Dr. Abraham and his last letters, to bring back to mind what my friend had looked like, how his voice had sounded. I thought of the years of our friendship and of the loss for his family and for the psychoanalytic movement, but I felt no sorrow.

I left the hotel and walked slowly up the road which, hemmed by fir trees, leads to the peak. Darkness had descended upon the snowy ground. The fir wood, the same in which I walked daily, had an unfamiliar appearance. The trees seemed to be higher, darker and towered almost menacingly up to the sky. The landscape seemed changed. It was now solemn and sinister as if it conveyed a mysterious message. I felt neither grief nor any other intense emotion as I walked up that road. (Literary convention forbids that a writer communicate anything but the final draft of his writing. Exceptions can be admitted only in the case of certain considerations of nonliterary nature. Here is such an exception, dictated by psychological interest. The sentence above reads in the first draft: ". . . as I walked up that lonely road." *The Lonely Road* is the title of a play by Arthur Schnitzler. The title refers to a remark the leading figure makes in a conversation with his friend: "Even if a crowd of bacchantes should accompany us—on the road down we are walking alone . . .") There was only that heavy and oppressive silence around me and in me. I still remember the dense and numb mood of that walk, but I don't remember—it is more than a quarter of a century since—how long I walked on in this mood. I thought of the speech I had to prepare for the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. The meeting would be in a few days. I considered what I would say and how I should say it.

In the middle of my reflections, I caught myself humming a melody I did not recognize. But I knew it immediately when it recurred: it was the first bars of the chorale from the last movement of Gustav Mahler's Second Symphony. I seemed to hear the ghostlike onset of

the choir, the voices, in octaves rising, but first *misterioso,* solemnly. Only afterwards did I remember the words of Klopstock's poem *Aufersteh'n* which have been used in that finale:

> You will rise again, my dust, after a short rest
> Immortal life will He grant who called.

That tune followed me in the next hours in which I thought of the speech I wanted to prepare, hut it began to haunt me whenever I thought of Dr. Abraham. It seemed, so to speak, the leitmotif of my mourning for my dead friend. But it also interfered with other trains of thought which had nothing to do with him. It surprisingly occurred to me in the middle of small talk with some guests of the hotel. It interrupted my writing a letter. It came to mind when I waked up and it was the last thought before I dozed off. It haunted me from that evening until New Year's day, and rarely left me for more than an hour. It was as if that melody had thrown a spell over me. I could not get rid of it, however much I tried to shake it off. A melody had followed me before for some hours, but I have never experienced an obsession of such tenacity before or since.

I had decided the draft of my speech had to be finished on New Year's Day at the latest. That tune accompanied my thoughts until I wrote the last sentence, then it stopped. There was, however, a change in its quality in the later days. At first it had that mysterious, dark, slowly progressing character of its beginning, but later on the melody sounded inside me in the grandiose waves of the finale, in the powerful unison of mixed voices, accompanied by organ, bells and trumpets:

> You will rise again, my heart, in a moment,
> And be borne up through struggle, to God.

It was now that triumphant finale that followed me until I had finished the writing of the draft.

I tried in vain to get rid of that tune by a maneuver of distraction of attention. I turned, for instance, in my thoughts from that melody, that anthem of the valley of Jehoshaphat, to the first movement of the symphony, to the powerful funeral march, played by the basses. I really succeeded in remembering that grave and plaintive march, but in a short time it was dislodged and replaced in my mind by the triumphant chorale of the finale. When I then tried to re-

capture the tune and the lines following the first appearance of the chorale melody, my memory failed me. Neither the words nor the tune of that part wanted to come to mind. Here was an interesting contrast: here was the melody that haunted me and the one immediately following that eluded me, the one I could not get rid of and the other I could not bring back to mind. The lines I had forgotten are:

> Believe, my heart, you have lost nothing.
> Everything you longed for is yours, yes, yours.
> You have not lived and suffered in vain!

Whatever else I tried to call up in my thoughts in order to exorcize that melody either failed to penetrate to the surface or was soon swept away by the hymn of the last movement. "Let me go wherever I will, I hear a sky-born music still!"

TWO

While still on the Semmering, I wondered about this experience. Why had that melody haunted me? When it first appeared, it was received like any other tune that might suddenly occur to you, you know not why. Only after it had emerged again and again, did I pay more attention to it. There must be some secret meaning.

There was a moment of astonishment when the tune recurred, hut it was quickly brushed aside. Wondering about a strange phenomenon will arouse your curiosity, but is perhaps insufficient to maintain your interest. You find an easy explanation and the subject is dismissed.

For some time the recurrence of that chorale was treated like one of those trifling events, those *petits riens* in which our mental life is so rich. Only when it developed into a disturbance, when it interfered with my thoughts, did I feel the need to get rid of it, to do away with it. It had now almost the character of something coming from outside. It did not occur, but incur, was no longer a guest, but an intruder.

I pondered about what the motif wanted to convey to me. I heard its message, but I did not understand it; it was as if it had been expressed in a foreign language I did not speak.

In order to get rid of the wearisome recurrent theme that had become a nuisance, I tried a kind of fragmentary self-analysis. I approached the subject first from the text of the resurrection chorus, now stripped of the melody. There was nothing in it that I could acknowledge as even close to my own thoughts. There is the vision of resurrection and Judgment Day. The graves open and the dead march in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then the great appeal sounds again, and the choir sets in with its message that there is no punishment. There was nothing in the lines of that chorale that struck a chord in me. As far as I could remember, I had never believed in resurrection. When I now thought of the idea, it had no more interest for me than any other religious belief. For the life of me, for that life whose continuation in the beyond I disbelieved, there was nothing in the chorale I could relate to myself. That ironic French sentence that when one is dead, it is for a long time *("Si on est mort, c'est pour longtemps,")* occurred to me. And then, as if in associative connection with Paris, where Heine lived, his lines:

Doch mir ist bang, ja mir ist bang,
Das Aufersteh'n wird nicht so rasch von statten geh'n.

Yet, I am afraid, yes, I am afraid
That for resurrection we have long to wait.

But men of great mind, for instance Goethe, believed in an immortal life! Did he not tell Eckermann that he could not imagine that the individuality could perish without any new manifestation?

The following thought associations seem to make little sense; they seemed to drift without steering from one subject to the next. There was a meeting of Goethe and Heine. . . . It was short and ended in a dissonance. . . . Goethe seemed to dislike the young poet. . . . He also disliked, it seems, Beethoven, for whose music he had no understanding. . . . Did he not meet Beethoven? . . . Yes, in Karlsbad. . . . Karlsbad is in Bohemia. . . . Mahler was born in Kalischt near Iglau, also in Bohemia. . . . Does this line of association indicate that I consider Mahler as the follower of Beethoven? . . . Or do I compare the chorale of Mahler's Second Symphony with the choir of Beethoven's Ninth? . . . Or is the connection in my thoughts between Weimar and Karlsbad, Germany and Bohemia which was a part of the old Austrian-Hungarian monarchy? . . .

Yes, Mahler was born in Bohemia, which means he was an Austrian. . . . I am an Austrian. . . . A sentence from a humorous book by J. Hašek, also a Bohemian, occurred to me: "I am an Austrian subject; what further calamity can befall me?"

It seems that I become merry. I make fun of the resurrection idea and of my native country. This is, I scolded myself, not an appropriate mood for a serious experiment in thought associations. I broke it off.

The next day I returned to the chorale text. I remembered that I had once discussed the idea of the beyond, of the Judgment Day and of ancestor worship with Abraham. That had been a few years before when Abraham had published his beautiful paper on the personality of that heroic Pharaoh, Amonhotep IV, who was a great religious reformer and perhaps the first monotheist in the history of mankind. In this discussion we drifted into some considerations about a subterranean connection between the ancient Egyptian religion and certain phases of Judaism. I remember that we spoke of the Kaddisch prayer, a commemoration the son has to say for his dead father and other rituals which can be interpreted as remnants of a repressed cult of the dead. In contrast to contemporary scholars who emphasize the interrelations between Babylonian and Israelitic religion, Abraham and I were of the opinion that those residues are to be traced back to ancient Egyptian religion. We then touched the topic of remnants of the Egyprian eschatology, of its ideas of the judgment and retribution, of the "last things" left in Judaism in changed forms and then renewed and elaborated in the grandiose vision of the Apocalypse. But here is a thought bridge between that discussion and thar chorale! The great panic before the last judgment, the march of the dead in that part of Mahler's symphony comes to mind; then the silence before the choir sets in with its message of redemption.

I remember along with that musical vision of the dread before the judgment my walk in the wood near the hotel, the oppressive silence around me, the fir trees which seemed to tower threateningly up to the sky, the landscape that bad taken on such a strange and gloomy character. What did it all mean? All those thoughts seemed to hint at something that eluded me.

Another time while I was writing the draft of my speech, a memory from the year of my analysis with Dr. Abraham came to

mind. I had then (1913) been enthusiastic about the symphonies of Mahler and I had spoken of the composer during an analytic session. Also, later on, I had tried to interest Abraham, who had become my friend, in those symphonies. He seemed not to relish the music of the Austrian composer, some of whose works he had heard. On a visit to Berlin I brought him some of Mahler's songs in the hope that he would enjoy them. Something of the North German in Abraham's personality was alien to Mahler's creations, just as I was almost insensitive to the special brand of humor Abraham liked in the grotesque-philosophical poems by Christian Morgenstern. I tried to call to mind the timbre of Abraham's voice. He had a distinctly North German pronunciation and spoke a correct, almost literary German in contrast to my somewhat softer and sloppier Viennese pronunciation. He came from Hamburg.

Half an hour later, it occurred to me that I had made a mistake. I knew, of course, that Abraham's birthplace was not Hamburg, but Bremen. Why had Hamburg occurred to me? I acquiesced in the very insufficient explanation that Hamburg and Bremen are the two great seaports of North Germany, that they are neighbor cities and are frequently mentioned together. If I had followed the line of my thoughts more energetically—that is, if I had investigated the unconscious motives of my mistake—I would have made some progress in my task of self-analysis. But I was easygoing. It seems that I conceived of it more as a playful exercise in thought associations than as a serious attempt at probing into the puzzling phenomenon of the haunting melody.

Yet I was so much nearer to the solution when, a few hours later, Hamburg again occurred to me. This time not in an erroneous connection with Abraham, but in a correct memory from Mahler's life. I remembered having read—was it in the little book *Gustav Mahler* by Paul Stefan?[1]—that the composer had received the inspiration for this resurrection chorale in Hamburg, where he was conductor of the opera. Other facts read in Stefan's book then came back to mind: that Hans von Bülow, the celebrated conductor of the Hamburger Abonnementkonzerte, had favored his young Austrian colleague and recommended him as his successor when he became ill. When Bülow

[1] I had read it soon after it had been published in 1910 (München: R. Piper & Co.) fifteen years before. Mahler was then still alive.

died, the Senate of Hamburg invited the citizens to a mourning ceremony at the church. Mahler attended the service at which a children's choir sang that poem by Klopstock "Rise again" to the music of Bach. Before that Mahler had ransacked literature to find lines for a final movement for his Second Symphony on which he had worked so long. When the children sang that chorale, it was as if destiny had found the lacking material, the finale crowning the powerful building of the symphony. The composer used the lines of that poem for his symphony's last movement. There was something meaningful in the emergence of these thought associations, but I could not grasp it.

Looking back at my attempt at self-analysis, I cannot help being very critical of myself. Any one of the trains of thought, had it been followed to the end, would have led to the heart of the problem I had set out to solve, but I did not follow those leads. There was, of course, an unconscious resistance operating which contrasted sharply with my conscious zeal to find out why that chorale haunted me. Yet I remained at the fringes of the associative material.

That reluctance expressed itself in a kind of impatience with the thoughts that occurred to me. They all seemed trifling and not worth bothering about. It is a mistake among laymen, and even among psychoanalysts that an intense resistance against a thought expresses itself only in the repression of the material. Thoughts and impulses which are contrary to our moral or esthetic demands can be dealt with otherwise. We often devaluate them, treat them as irrelevant and immaterial or insignificant. They need not be buried deep in the ground. It suffices to throw them into the ashcan of our mind, to degrade them to the lowest form of mental existence.

Consciously I was most eager to understand why the melody pursued me, but the unconscious resistance in the shape of my impatience prevented me from grasping the meaning of my thought associations, which seemed to evaporate as soon as I tried to catch them. They vanished whenever I approached them like a flock of birds disperses when scared away by the appearance of the hunter.

I felt very dissatisfied with myself when I had to break off the attempt. What was it that made me think again and again of that tune? Something concealed operated there, in that re-emergence of the melody. The reed moves only when the wind blows.

THREE

The attempt at self-analysis had failed. Lack of moral courage much more than lack of concentration was responsible for the fact that I had not reached my aim. In the following years I tried to approach it in three ways simultaneously or successively. But before I describe that development, I wish to interrupt the presentation of the psychological investigation and insert the memorial speech that had occupied me in the time between Christmas and New Year's and which was given at the meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association on January 6, 1926, a few days after the melody had ceased to haunt me.

There are quite a few reasons which make this insertion desirable and even necessary at this point. In this speech I tried to give an appropriate picture of the personality of my friend and teacher, whose relationship with me will be discussed later on. In the lines that follow—and between them—the reader will find traces of this relationship, especially from the time of my analysis with Dr. Abraham—and these traces will have some bearing on the psychological presentation of the associative connections that will follow. Finally, I hope that the reader will be able by reading this speech to form an idea of the emotional situation in which it was written, of the frame of mind I was in in the days following the mournful message, and especially of those hours in which the tune of the resurrection choir pursued me. The insertion of the speech is not only justified as a picture of the deceased friend but is also necessary as a premise for the understanding of the emotional processes of that time. Last—but not least—the speech is itself a not unimportant bit of material for the following self-analysis.

The meeting was opened by some remarks by the chairman, Dr. Federn; then Anna Freud read the paragraphs which Freud had dedicated to this younger friend with whom, as he said, "we bury one of the greatest hopes of our young science . . . perhaps an irretrievable loss to its future." Then followed my speech:[2]

[2] The speech of Freud's is contained in Vol. XI of his *Gesammelte Schriften*. An issue of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* (Bd. XII, Heft 2) contains a posthumous paper by Abraham, a detailed article appreciating the scientific achievements of Abraham by Ernest Jones and the speeches given at the memorial meetings in Moscow, Berlin and Vienna, including mine.

Eulogy for Karl Abraham

Only a few days have passed since the message of Karl Abraham's death reached us, and it appears premature at this time to try to give a review of his scientific papers and of his work. We restrict ourselves rather to following an outline of our friend's development, and must leave to a future occasion the appreciation of the importance of his individual accomplishments.

As assistant of Bleuler, Abraham had already published some scientific contributions to the clinical description of mental diseases when he became acquainted with the teaching of Freud. Then, in 1904, only a few of Freud's basic works had been published. There remained the task of clarifying by independent research so much that still remained dark, of solving many contradictions in theory, of finding connections between particular groups of facts, of getting an understanding of a major part of abnormal mental life. The vivid interest, the zeal for work and the drive of research living in the physician, then twenty-seven years old, turned to the new science. He was most attracted by the psychology of mental disturbances, then not much investigated, and his first analytic papers dealt with them. After he had given up his work in the institution and entered free psychotherapeutic practice, the scope of his tasks became enlarged, and also that of the problems which awakened his scientific curiosity.

Abraham's first contribution had already shown that he was not satisfied with examination and verification of psychoanalytic theories, but that he worked independently with the new insights and enriched them by most careful observations which modified them. By 1907 he had contributed an important complement to the theory in recognizing the experience of sexual traumata as a form of infantile sexual activity and in proving the validity of this opinion by telling examples. Each of his succeeding smaller contributions marked an increase of new insights. In those early papers, one of his most excellent qualities became clearly apparent: the gift of differentiation, which is the most important capability of the investigator who works clinically.

The major part of his writings is dedicated to clinical explorations. Newer studies, founded on rich experiences, led him to the

successful attempt to present a history of the evolution of libido from the viewpoint of the analysis of emotional disturbances. I need not remind you what importance this attempt has in our science. It takes its point of departure from another attempt, dated ten years before, to explain the manic-depressive disease in a psychoanalytic manner, and shows the relationship between the different forms of psychoneurotic illness to the phases of the development of the libido. Following the tracks of Freud, the melancholic states and the manic-depressive phenomena are here traced back to their deep-rooted origins and their development is made understandable from analytic points of view.

Future psychiatric research will have to start from these papers by Abraham which give us the best insights into the psychogenesis and structure of those pathological states. Remaining on the ground of inductive research, he turned in his studies to the most primitive phases of the libido and has given us the best continuation and complement of Freud's Three Contributions to the Theory of Sexuality. *Time will show the importance of his investigations of the pregenital development of the libido and its effects upon the evolution of character. Besides this work, a river of smaller contributions flowed along at a prolific and constant rate. Each of them a pattern of his analytic gift of observation and of psychological accuracy, they brought about an enlargement of our knowledge of the origin and significance of neurotic symptoms, explained complicated phenomena, turned our attention to still unobserved material, showed new sources of character and symptom formation in sexual components and erogenic zones, secured the first insights into psychosexual phenomena that were as difficult to grasp as the premature sexual emission, and put decisive technical problems which he brought close to solution. It must be considered further that in addition to these papers he published valuable contributions to the history of art, to the science of the history of religion and to mythology, and that, as his last beautiful paper shows, he was going to apply the psychoanalytic method to the area of criminology. Looking at all these contributions, one gets an idea of how wide the horizon of his interests in research extended without losing the acuteness of observation and the penetrating sharpness of recognition.*

When you try to characterize Abraham's work, you have to start from the fact that he was and remained, first and foremost, a clinician. Yes, one has to say that with him the best clinical observer has left the group of Freud's followers. When Abraham collected his papers at a late date, he was able to publish his early papers unchanged, although quite a few corrections and additions could have been made, as he himself pointed out. However, the essential results of his investigations could stay as they were; none of them had to be retracted or disavowed as erroneous because all were founded on careful and long observation. His undilutedly empirical method of arriving at scientific insights has to be emphasized again and again; they are all the result of consecutive and patient work. He once wrote: "I believe that I have renounced all speculative transgression of the empirical ground."

He never tried to give an all-inclusive theory; on the contrary, he himself repeatedly pointed out the gaps and shortcomings in what he had to present to the reader. This gift of observation was accompanied by discrimination and a rare faculty of understanding another's feelings and motives. His papers reveal how carefully they were prepared and how slowly the final results were distilled and abstracted from experiences. Almost all of them originated in observations of a great number of analyses. What he had discovered there, he shaped into a concise, transparent form that makes almost a too sober or stylistically economical impression. You will search in vain for surprising beauties of diction, for high- or profound-sounding sentences in his writings, but there is nothing confused or confusing in them. Here clarity governs. Here is a presentation clear as daylight, which is most astonishing in the face of the complex and complicated emotional situations, of the multiple, varied, reluctant and difficult material he observed. Connecting threads are followed through the most multifarious substance to their most subtle ends, to their most concealed folds. The way of presenting the problem, the explanation of its difficulties and many sides, the beginnings of a solution, the consideration of the many-shaped substances, the progression from first impressions to renewed observation and finally to theories that always remain close to the observed material and can be verified by it—how often we admired these characteristic features in Abraham's work!

His analytic talent had, it is true, certain limitations, but he knew them; more than this, he occasionally pointed them out in private conversations and he never transgressed them. He never

attempted to present an all-comprising problem in a grandiose al-fresco outline, without considering the particular contradictions of reality. He always took his point of departure from a narrowly limited special topic, but the method by which he worked it out remains unforgotten and unforgettable. The narrow frame enlarged itself more and more and allowed a look into the wide space. He could never impress his reader or listener by the greatness of his concept, but he could always show him to what important conclusion he could arrive, starting from a special problem. At the end you always got the impression that the walls receded and the narrow room was changed into a wide hall. He always left us with the impression that our understanding and our insight had been enlarged and that what he said was only a fraction of what he could have said and what he still forbade himself to state for reasons of caution and scientific self-restraint. He used discretion which was not the better part of valor, but its most necessary complement in the service of research. As a research worker, he was never daring, but always brave, never eager to solve the great problems of psychic life in a casual and carefree manner, but always endeavoring, with untiring patience and tenacity, to bring light into concealed connections. Not a man of genius, but a magnificent man, never enrapturing, but always convincing us.

His bravery had the character of the unswerving and unflinching which concerned the core of his own scientific endeavor and yet admitted modestly the possibility of individual mistake. He listened attentively to what others had to say, always willing to acknowledge the merits of others, but he held for himself the most severe standard for his achievements. As a physician, Abraham was of unusual steadiness and equanimity. He was not one of those physicians who try to deceive others by self-righteousness and over-self-assurance. He had recognized too well how remote medicine is from an ideal therapy. But the feeling of calm self-assertion which he showed was conveyed to his patients. Equally distant from over-appreciation and under-evaluation of the efficiency of psychoanalytic therapy, he awakened in them the conviction that they were in the best hands and they could trust themselves to his absolute integrity.

He rarely spoke, but his silence was eloquent and in a special manner pressing and encouraging. His voice sounded in its dark timbre quiet and quieting. Cool and aware of distance, still he was humanly close when it was necessary; he was sure of the trust his patients and students had in him. It was not accidental that he coined the term "post-ambivalence." He himself seemed to be a personification of the post-ambivalent attitude in psychoanalysis. A patient who remained in treatment until late into the time of Abraham's illness, and had several times been a witness to the terrible coughing attacks and breathing emergencies of his physician, made a very penetrating comment about him: Abraham appeared to him as Horatio, "a man that fortune's buffets and rewards has ta'en with equal thanks."

In psychoanalysis as in private conversation, Abraham occasionally showed flashes of a strange, dry humor that is not to be found in his writings. I could hear a pessimistic note in it only once, when I visited him after he had recovered from his first serious illness in Switzerland, a country he so much loved. He remarked while taking a walk with me that he still had difficulties in walking uphill because of great shortness of breath. Smiling and with odd self-irony, he added, "But I am good when going downhill."

Vocation and inclination led him equally to become the master of the young generation of analysts. In this function he was steady, patient and emotionally balanced. His explanations, communicated rarely and in a matter-of-fact tone, really gave information to his students. They were remote from dry theory and tried to make the student understand what needed an interpretation, as much as possible using material from the life story of the student himself, from observations gathered in common work on his own character traits, habits and personal peculiarities.

Why deny it? Some psychoanalysts have believed they could prove their early independence from a teacher, as well as their independence of thought, in getting quickly emancipated from his influence and in becoming emphatically opposed to him. Occasionally one has referred to the sentence by Nietzsche: "You reward your teacher badly when you always remain only his pupil." But whatever may be justified in this sentence, it has nothing to do with the indecent high speed in which the "conquest" of the teacher often takes place at present. We hope that the students of Abraham are protected against such a possibility by the analytic insight they have obtained from their master. We believe that they will not underestimate the emotional relationships between master and student in their pro-

found and lasting effects, and that they, even long after they are accustomed to walk on their own paths, remain aware of what their master has been to them; he still abides.

Abraham also showed imperturbability and responsibility, with which North German restraint and sobriety were mixed, in the foundation and direction of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society, as well as in his work for the polyclinic which he led together with Dr. Eitingon. One has to consider what it signified at that time to get the serious attention of scientific circles on the hard ground of Berlin in the German Reich of Wilhelm II. What it meant, in a period of that shallowest common sense in whose name most stupid things are said, to sponsor, as a respected physician, the theories of the unconscious and to lead the analytic movement—in spite of the intense resistance of one's environment—to the important position it has on the German scene today. As a leader of an increasing number of courageous pioneers, not through any external sign, but by all inner ones, he laboriously conquered every inch of ground, remained calm and prepared for all eventualities in the outside world and, within his own group, was cautious without being petty and over-scrupulous. Ready to help anybody who was serious, he was mostly reserved and observant, as if he was always thinking of Polonius' advice: "Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice."

It can scarcely be avoided that every important and grave event entering our lives leads us after some time slowly back to analytic trains of thought. Psychoanalysis has convinced us that all mourning is connected with unconscious self-reproach that can be traced back to certain emotional attitudes toward the deceased. This self-reproach, however typical, is individually different according to the individual relationship to the person who died. Yet there is, I believe, one of a general nature. I was reminded of it the other day by the remark of a little boy. The four-year-old son of a patient saw a funeral procession on the street and asked what it was. His mother explained to him what death and funeral mean. The child listened attentively and then asked with wide eyes, "But why is there music? He is already dead and does not hear it any more." There is a serious and even a profound meaning for us in the simplicity of the child's question. It puts us to shame as we become aware of the inadequacy and the impotence of our words in the face of the great silence. But it shames us, too, because it leads to the question: Must

such things happen before we are able to express how much we appreciate and care for our friends?

Yet before we move along that road, destined for us all, inner need drives us more imperatively than decency to salute Karl Abraham for the last time as one of the most valuable and successful pioneers of our young science. His lifework, incomplete as any scientific endeavor must be, was yet perfect of its kind; piecework, as is all research, it was a unity. In the fruitfulness of his scientific results, as in his lasting effects on the life and accomplishments of his students, his work will give credit to its creator who so untimely left our ranks.

FOUR

The attentive reader of this eulogy will easily recognize that there is at least one echo of the preceding week in which the tune of Mahler's Second Symphony haunted me. It cannot be accidental that the question of the little boy who saw the funeral and heard the music occurred in my thoughts. The first movement of the symphony contains a powerful recurring funeral march. The "symphonic hero" is here borne to the grave. Those solemn tunes, that plaintive song, increasing in passionate grievance, had been recalled when I tried to escape from the haunting chorale of the finale. The funeral march of the first movement intruded into my thoughts when I jotted down the sentences for the memorial speech.

After I had finished my eulogy, Freud, who sat near me, shook my hand, and Dr. Paul Federn, the chairman, closed the meeting with a few sentences. The old, friendly man made a slip of the tongue which made us smile and lifted, at least for the moment, the gloomy atmosphere of the evening. He said, "We appreciate the speech, we just heard by Dr. Abraham." . . . Did that slip reveal that he wished me dead or was it an unconscious compliment? Conceited as I was, I unhesitatingly adopted the second interpretation. I could not imagine that anybody could seriously compare my modest accomplishments with those of Karl Abraham, but I must have wished unconsciously to be acknowledged not only as his student, but as his successor. I knew from my analysis that I had emulated him, but I had never daydreamed that I could reach a position comparable to his within our science or the psychoanalytic movement. Such thoughts

must, nevertheless, have been unconsciously working in me. They even reveal themselves in the last sentence of my eulogy about the accomplishments of his students. I must have been, indeed, flattered —of course I was—that Freud wished me to give the speech at that meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society.

It is sometimes harder to confess feelings of silly vanity or ideas of grandeur than deeds or thoughts one should or could be more ashamed of. I just now was going to suppress such a trait of petty vanity, namely, the memory that I was proud of a trifling detail of my style in that speech. The last paragraph runs in German: "*Dennoch heisst uns, bevor wir die uns allen vorgezeichnete Strasse weiterziehen, inneres Bedürfnis gebieterischer als Ziemlichkeit, Karl Abraham zum letzten Mal zu grüssen. . . .*" ("Yet before we move along that road, destined for us all, inner need drives us more imperatively than decency to salute. . . .") I still remember that I relished in my thoughts the repetition of the i-vowel in that sentence. I would have suppressed this petty feature, had not my mentioning the name of Freud admonished me to be more strict with myself. I remembered, namely, that many years later when I asked Freud for help in an actual conflict and was in a short psychoanalysis with him, I once said during a session, "I am ashamed to say what just occurred to me . . ." and Freud's calm voice admonished me, "Be ashamed, but say it!"

After the meeting was closed, I accompanied Freud to his home in the Berggasse. He praised my speech and emphasized that I had not merely given a laudatory oration, but had also mentioned some of the weaknesses and shortcomings of Abraham, whom he appreciated so highly. He added that we are still unconsciously afraid of the dead, and because of this hidden awe are often led to speak of them only in overpraising terms. He quoted the Latin proverb, *De mortuis nil nisi bene*, as an expression of that unconscious fear, and added a humorous Jewish anecdote which makes fun of the insincerity of eulogies.

The conversation with Freud remained in my memory because it touched a subject which had preoccupied my thoughts in the last weeks before I went on Christmas vacation. I planned then to write a paper on the primal form of autobiography and the motives that made men write the story of their lives. I had studied the history of autobiography as far as I could gather material in presentations of

ancient cultures and followed its traces until they were indiscernible in prehistoric times. The first autobiographies were not written, but chiseled into stone. They are to be found in the tombs of the Babylonian-Assyrian and Egyptian civilizations and can be traced back as far as about 3000 B.C. We have autobiographical documents of this kind from old Egypt about great personalities of the court. They have typical features in common and appear as self-glorifications of achievements, as documents of self-righteousness. The craving for fame and a desire to live in the memory of posterity become clear later on. In the inscriptions on tombs, the wish is expressed "to bring one's name to eternal memory in the mouth of the living." Thus, the stones really speak *(Saxa loquuntur)* and become monuments for the dead. The desire to be admired and loved seems to reach beyond one's life. There must be other motives of an unconscious kind that propelled men to write autobiographies, for instance self-justification, relief from unconscious guilt feeling and others. Such motives reveal themselves in Rousseau's *Confessions*, in John Henry Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* and in modern autobiographies.

Walking home from the meeting, the conversation with Freud echoed in me and led me back to the subject of the beginnings of autobiography which were originally conceived with the thoughts of one's death and were written, so to speak, from the point of view of one's own memory with posterity, *sub specie mortis*. The desire to live in the memory of later generations, as it is expressed in the tombs of ancient Egypt, must have led to the thought of the weighing of the souls in Egyptian religion. The Judgment Day in Christian eschatology and similar ideas are expressions of a free-floating, unconscious guilt feeling and make men terrified that they will be punished in the beyond. In some artists this guilt feeling concerns their works: they are afraid they have not accomplished enough. From somewhere an anecdote came to mind that I had read about Anton Bruckner, the great composer.[3] When he was already very ill, the old man said to a visitor, "Yes, my dear, now I have to be very hard-working so that at least the Tenth Symphony will be finished. Otherwise I will not pass before God before Whom I shall soon stand. He will say, 'Why else have I given you talent, you son of a bitch, than

[3] In *Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler* by Natalie Bauer-Lechner (Leipzig and Vienna, 1923), p. 28.

that you should sing to My praise and glory? But you have accomplished much too little.' " Again the Judgment Day, this time in the naïve concept of the religious Catholic master.

It is, of course, not accidental that my thought shifted from Bruckner to Mahler, whom the old master highly respected and who frequently conducted Bruckner's symphonies. (But was it not significant that I had forgotten the place where I had read that anecdote? Mahler himself was the visitor and he told the story to his friend Bauer-Lechner.) It was at this point of my thoughts that, after a pause of a week, the resurrection chorale came to mind again. This time it was the tune that begins delicately:

With wings I have won for myself,
In fervent love I shall soar
To the light unseen

to the proud unison of voices:

I shall die to live . . .

I sang the tune walking through the night until I was home. I realized, of course, that the recurrence of the chorale must have something to do with the conquest of death and with immortality. The words of its text:

O Death, all-conquering one,
Now you are conquered

and

I shall die to live . . .

pointed clearly in this direction, but these ideas did not "speak" to me. I was not aware of any fear of dying nor did the problem of immortality of the soul bother me. Never before or since have metaphysical questions of this kind occupied my attention very long. Psychological interests always had a predominant place in my thoughts, and it seems that my narrow talent is also restricted to this area.

It certainly did not prove itself, however, in this special case, because it failed me in the solution of an insignificant minor problem.

Looking back now, I am able to put my finger on the spot where my initial and repeated mistake in my experiment in thought associations can be found. When you give yourself to free associations, when you follow without excluding any associations everything that occurs to you, it is necessary to keep in mind the first thought, the point of your departure into that unknown area. From time to time you have to return to this original idea or notion, even from the remotest thought. If you did not cling to this first thought from which you started, you would be lost in the labyrinth of thought associations as Theseus would have been without Ariadne's helpful thread that enabled him to find the way out of the maze of King Minos of Crete. In my experiment I had drifted from one thought association into another in free movement, but I had acted contrary to this other, often neglected part of the psychological rule—namely, to keep the point of departure in mind.

The failure of my attempt did not teach me a lesson in this direction; on the contrary, it led me astray in an even more general manner. Instead of remaining within the realm of inland navigation, having the port before my eyes, I went out into the wide sea when I had lost my way. I tried to solve the special question of why that chorale had haunted me in entering into research on why a certain melody follows people, sometimes for hours. Instead of adhering to the particular problem, I attempted to find a solution for it in following a general line. For many months I concentrated on this subject, read all I could find about it in books and articles and gathered material from the analysis of patients and from self-observation. This interest ran beside others during the following years. Excerpts from books and articles were made, notes on theories and observations jotted down, and much time and energy was wasted on an expedition for which I was not equipped. On this wide detour, some of whose stations are marked in the following chapters, I finally returned to the point of departure, to the unconscious meaning of the chorale melody that haunted me between Christmas and New Year's, 1925, to the experience to which this volume owes its existence.

CHAPTER XVIII

Symphony in C Minor

ONE

As I HAVE pointed out earlier in this book, the phenomenon that we are sometimes persecuted by a certain melody cannot be clearly and cleanly separated from the more general one that a certain melody occurs to us in the middle of a train of thought, of a conversation or of our daily work. The haunting melody is only different in duration or intensity from the everyday experience when a tune occurs to us, we do not know why. With the exception of an already mentioned very short passage in Freud's *On the Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, published in 1904, no discussion of the interesting phenomenon is known to me in psychoanalytic literature.

A study of the other very slender literature on the subject shows that there is a scarcity of observation as well as of theories. The predominant theory which attempts to explain the phenomenon is still founded on the psychology of conscious thought associations. A tune occurs to me, for instance, because I just passed the house where I first heard it, or I thought of the occasion on which I heard it. I am thinking of my mother and I remember her once singing a certain song. Now that tune occurs to me ("Songs my mother taught me"). The place, certain circumstances, a definite situation bring a melody back to mind in conscious thoughts. Optical, acoustical and other impressions originated in the senses are, of course, helpful as agents of such associations.

The oldest explanation for the phenomenon I found in scientific literature was given by the famous mathematician, Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827), who describes the case of a man who, to his own surprise, sang an old forgotten song under his breath while he walked on the street of Saint Germain in serious thought. After two hundred steps he saw a blind man standing playing this song on his violin. The sounds of the violin must have reached his ears without his having heen aware of it in a *semiperception du son*. Laplace concludes that our sensory apparatus can perceive impressions which are too faint to be felt, but sufficient to determine actions whose cause we don't know.[1] This statement is indubitably correct.

The newer psychology does not insist on the role of sensory impressions as agents of thought associations. Intellectual processes can also form the mental link to the tune that occurs to you. One of the psychologists of the Wilhelm Wundt school emphasizes as a significant trait that the "initial and end link of that psychical process in most cases stand side by side without an intermediate stage, while the mental bridge of the connecting link does not at first come to conscious mind and usually is recognized in its significance after some pondering."[2] This writer gives many instances of "strange connections of ideas" with tunes, but none of them throws any light on the motives for a certain melody's recurrence to me. The papers of other psychologists who assert that conscious, though remote, associations remind a person of a special tune, also remain either on the fringes of psychological investigation or content themselves with superficial explanations.

There is only one paper that, as far as my knowledge goes, deals with the problem of the haunting melody. The writer of the article is Hans Schneider, a conductor and music teacher (1863-1906). The writer puts the question in the form of a somewhat verbose question, namely: "Who is that mysterious master who disturbs that *dolce far niente* of our resting mind with uninvited musical guests, who decides what shall occupy our mind or that some melody should occupy it at all when it wishes to be at rest or left to its well-earned musicless solitude?" You hear here the voice of the professional

[1] P. S. Laplace, "Essai philosophique sur les Probabilités, Procédé d'une Notice historique" (Bruxelles, 1829), p. 168.

[2] Richard Henning, "Merkwürdige Ideenassociationen" (*Zeitschrift für die gesamte Psychologie* [Nos. 4-6, 1936/1937], p. 316).

musician, and we expect that we will get full information from a musical authority who is also interested in psychological problems. Schneider answers his question pointing to "the function of our memory" being "stimulated by something from without." Whenever a certain tune occurs in our mind, it does not do so accidentally or unbidden. It appears "because it has been called or revived by something." The fact that it is that particular melody, and not any other of the many thousands our mind harbors, is due to the emergence of something that was once closely connected with it in our thoughts.

Schneider gives the following instance: He looked at the picture of his mother in the middle of his work. Two hours later, when he went to bed, a lullaby his mother used to sing to the children came back to his mind. He reports some cases which indicate that a certain emotion leads to the emergence of a certain song or a melodic phase. He had, for instance, studied with a pupil the Müller songs by Schubert. A passage in one of the songs always impressed him as "the quintessence of sadness and soul misery." It seemed to him as the keynote to the whole cycle, as the phrase "in which the whole tragedy of the poor miller boy seemed to be concentrated and crystallized." He believes that this feeling was perhaps not very clear and intense, and he was not as conscious of its character as later on. He once passed the bulletin board of a newspaper and read there that the steamer *Elbe* had been in a collision in the English Channel and had gone down with all on board, and all at once an inner voice sang that phrase of Schubert's songs to him. "I could not get rid of them for a long while and they haunted me persistently as long as the emotional state brought about by this catastrophe lasted. And why? Was it accidental? No. These thirds were the most befitting musical expression of what moved me; and, ever since, the tragedy at sea and this melody have been inseparable." Here we have a truly haunting melody, a representative example of tbe species.[3] In Schneider's attempt at explanation we meet a new factor that had been neglected in the observations of the psychologists of the Wundt school, namely, the emotional content or expression of a melody.

Schneider gives other examples in which this factor plays a role: He read of the Russian revolution, and tbe last movement of Tschai-

[3] Schneider reports that when the next summer, he passed the place where the ship had sunk, the same melody appeared "in all its beauty and intense sadness."

kovsky's *Pathétique* occupied his mind "for quite a while." Schneider also recommends a method which may he applied when a melody is too persistent and haunts us to death. One should fight it with its own weapon—with another melody. Thus, he was once haunted by a song hit *Pony Boy* and got rid of the intruder by singing the Prize Song from Wagner's *Meistersinger*. "Why just this, I have no reason or idea, but it relieves me every time after a determined application." The musician asserts that certain conclusions are especially advantageous for the appearance of a haunting melody; for instance, an "empty" or undisturbed mind will greatly help a melody to exert its full power. In his opinion the whole process is "but a certain phase of the phenomenon of suggestion and even hypnotism." In certain cases the re-emergence of a melody is not a function of memory, but is to be explained by mental fatigue "due to overstimulation of our auditory organ."

Yet Schneider admits there are many cases in which we cannot find even an indirect or secondary stimulation, in which still another link is mysteriously hidden. Yet a stimulus must he somewhere, "for nature never skips." Schneider's theory, especially the point that the haunting melody responds to the bidding of a feeling or of an emotion, has considerable merit in spite of its obvious shortcomings and its general and vague character. We appreciate especially that he insists that the appearance of the haunting melody is determined in each individual case. According to Pierre Janet, "the mind is nohody's fool," not even its own.

It is conspicuous that the phenomenon of the haunting melody has found little attention on the part of musicians. I came across only one instance besides Schneider's paper of a composer's experience of this kind. Jacques Offenbach reports this experience himself in an article *"Histoire d'une valse"* in 1876.[4] When the young musician was alone in Paris, earning his daily bread by playing the violoncello in the opera company, he was haunted by a slow waltz. When he was a child, his mother and sisters used to lull him into sleep with the sweet tune. He never knew more than eight bars of it. They haunted him when he was lonely in a foreign city, at an age when other children are still in school with many years of school still before them. Each note of the tune, which he did not consider very

[4] "The Story of a Waltz," *The Musical Courier* (1897), Vol. 35, No. 13, pp. 7-9. Translated by Ralph Edmunds.

beautiful, brought recollections of home from which he had been so long separated. When those bars flitted through his mind, he saw his father's house in Koeln and his family. This passage of eight bars assumed strange proportions in his mind. "It had ceased to be a mere waltz. It had become almost a prayer which I hummed from morning to night, not as a supplication to Heaven, but it seemed to me that when I repeated it my family heard me, and when it echoed in me I could have sworn it was my loved ones at home who responded to me."

The story of how, many years later, Offenbach found the composer of that waltz and heard its continuation deserves to be read in the original. The example interests us here because it clearly shows the emotional nature of the re-emergence of the haunting melody. Offenbach's description goes even beyond the characterization in this direction: the haunting melody took on the character of a message or a communication with beloved persons. It is almost a prayer, although we would prefer to call it a magical ritual. A continuation of psychological reflections on this theme would lead us to the magical origins and functions of music in general.

There is, as far as my knowledge goes, only a single instance in which the phenomenon of the haunting melody is discussed in psychoanalytic literature. It is a passage in Freud's *Introductory Lectures*.[5] It is there stated that melodies which occur to us are conditioned and determined by trains of thought that have a right to be heard and that occupy our mind. "It is easy," says Freud, "to show that the relation to the melody is tied to its text or origin, but I have to be cautious not to extend this statement to really musical people about whom I have no experience." With them, he admits, the occurrence of a melody might be determined by its musical content. The first case is certainly frequent. Freud mentions the instance of a young man who was for some time haunted by Paris' song from *La Belle Hélène*, a song which, to be sure, is charming. Analysis turned his attention to the fact that a girl Ida competed in his interest with another by name Hélène.

This factor was hitherto neglected in the psychological theories on the subject, namely, the relation to the text of the melody, especially the unconscious connection of this text to interests of the individual.

[5] "Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse," *Gesammelte Schriften*, VII, 106.

Every psychoanalyst can contribute numerous instances that prove this unconscious motivation of the haunting melody. I have given some earlier. Here are a few more instances from my own practice: A patient was haunted by a tune he did not recognize. He hummed it to friends, but nobody could tell him what the tune was. An acquaintance finally recognized it: it was a song hit from a musical at the time of World War II: "Kiss the boys good-by." The patient was trying in his psychoanalysis to find the transition from homosexuality to heterosexuality. Another patient is often bothered during the analytic session by a tune he heard on the radio. It is from the operetta *White Horse Inn,* and the beginning words of the song are:

Was kann der Sigismund dafür
Dass er so schön ist?

The patient, who does not understand German well, translated the text in his thoughts by: "What can Sigismund do about it?" He expressed his unconscious resistance against psychoanalysis in this sentence, which says that Sigmund Freud is unable to change his neurotic conflicts. Another patient asked his wealthy uncle for a loan of several thousand dollars. His request was rejected. The patient, leaving his uncle's house and walking down Park Avenue, was surprised that the tune of the *Internationale* was persistently in his mind.

In a great number of cases, it is very obvious that the emergence of the melody is connected not with the text, but with the title of the musical composition, that an unconscious thought bridge leads from associations of a personal kind to this title.

I owe Dr. Carl Sulzberger the account of a patient of his who is fighting with his exhibitionistic impulses. This man, who was on his way to a public park in which he sometimes yielded to the temptation of perverted self-exposure, was haunted by a few bars which he recognized as a passage from the Reformation Symphony by Mendelssohn. Other psychiatrists and psychoanalysts reported similar cases to me in which the title of the composition like *Ein kleine Nachtmusik,* Jupiter Symphony or *Pathétique* are to a certain extent responsible for the emergence of a tune in the minds of patients.[6]

The psychological progress which is marked by the introduction of the unconscious factor of thought associations connected with the text is so obvious that it makes it almost easier to formulate the criticism of the theory. Freud himself already anticipates the objection that the emergence of the melody cannot be determined only by the text of the tune; to the example he quotes, he adds the remark that the Paris song is really charming—a hint of its esthetic quality. Freud admits, too, that for really musical people the content of the tune might be of great significance. It seems to me that Freud's theory emphasizes one-sidedly the determining role of the text. The melody itself must be of a much higher significance than Freud assumed. The esthetic quality or the musical content need not even be very valuable. Did we not hear from H. Schneider, a professional musician and piano teacher, that he was haunted by a banal, certainly not wonderful tune, *Pony Boy?* And how often do you and I find that we cannot get rid of a tune of very questionable or clearly poor quality, a vulgar waltz or march! Since a tune had no words, it was one of the *Lieder ohne Worte* and you did not appreciate its musical value highly, but it perhaps haunted you for a whole day.

It must be that this tune was the musical expression of a certain mood or feeling, the adequate or congenial presentation of an emotional attitude you felt at the moment. It is not necessary that the person be aware or conscious of this particular emotion, yes, he can even feel consciously in a different, even in an opposite mood. A patient of mine who broke with a sweetheart after a relationship of long duration, and who felt very sad, became aware that with the inner ear he heard persistently in the middle of his depression a very cheerful march tune. In his analytic session the next day, he had to

[6] An accident is worth mention here: In a passage of a mystery story (R. L. F. McCombs, *Clue in Two Flats* [New York, 1940]) I read the other day of how a famous conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra is killed under mysterious circumstances. The second violinist realizes while he cheerfully walks down the broad corridor leading backstage that he is humming one of the lugubrious themes from Tschaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony. "Of all our tunes, why that?" he said to himself. "On such a cheerful day, too? Must be a sign of bad luck. Not for me, I hope."

admit to himself that he must have felt that the breaking off of the relationship was a liberation, as the lifting of an emotional burden, freeing him for certain tasks he had had to postpone on account of it. We have thus to consider that unconscious and even repressed emotions find their manifestations in such emerging melodies. We know that Mozart wrote the great E Flat Major Symphony and the Jupiter Symphony during one of the most unhappy periods of his life. Mahler's Fourth Symphony was composed in a depressed mood, while the Sixth Symphony, which was called the tragic, was written when the composer felt "cheerful . . . and flourishing like a green bay tree," as his wife says.

The factor of the musical expression of a certain emotion in the tune, which is conspicuously neglected in Freud's theory of the haunting melody, becomes immediately clear in cases in which there is no text for the composition or in which the text is evidently not known to the person. For instance, what can be responsible for my being haunted by a certain passage from the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven, or the fact that the slow movement of Mozart's Sonata No. 8, that lyrical song of utmost tranquillity, does not want to yield its place in my thoughts?

There is no doubt that the words have a determining role in the emergence of the tune, but even when there is a recognizable thought connection between this text and some personal interests of the individual, is the text the only factor? Why did not a quotation from a poem, one that is known to the person and presents an equally adequate thought connection, occur to him? And why not the tune of another song with the similar possibility of the same associative connection? Consider now songs and arias alone, in other words, tunes accompanied by words. Even with these cases there must be something responsible for the unconscious choice of a particular tune. Furthermore, the relation of melody and text is in itself by no means simple. It has more than one meaning. Some references to the process of musical composition will make clear that the melody is not just accompanying the text, but expresses something else, more than words can say.

In the musical creative process, the text of a poem provides, so to speak, a stimulus to awaken emotions or moods that had been there before, waiting for the release of expression. The texts have to fulfill certain musical requirements, but, more important, they

must be able to stimulate, but are unable to fully express those emotions. The text has, as some composers say, to be "spacious" or "roomy," not satiated with music.[7] If it is not capacious in that sense, the composer has no possibility of expressing and expanding himself. Richard Strauss occasionally remarked that some of Goethe's poems are so "charged with expression" that the composer has "nothing more to say to it," and Reger considered some poems wonderful, but saying enough in themselves. The kind of material with which the composer fills the "spaciousness" of the text is alluded to when Wilhelm Kienzl said about his music to the libretto of the *Evangelimann:* "They were interjections in form of notes." The relation of music to text is illustrated by some remarks Arnold Schönberg made about his compositions.[8] He reports that he composed some of his songs, stirred up by the sound of the initial text-words, "without concerning myself in the least about the development of the poetical events, yes, without even grasping them in the ecstasy of composition." Some days later he looked up what was really the content of his song. To his greatest surprise, it became apparent that "I never gave the poet more due than when, stimulated by the first words, I guessed everything that had necessarily to follow."

If we neglect the psychological difference between the composer and the listener, we daresay that the text must also play a similar role for the person who is haunted by a melody. It is an important point of contact that reminds the person of a similar inner experience or awakens similar emotions or moods as expressed in the text. But the tune expresses something else or more: the immediate quality of experience. It is an emotional expression much more adequate than words. In the relieving process of singing the tune, the emotions that move the person are much more discharged by the tune than by the text of a song. It is also remarkable that it is very rarely that the words of a tune without the music occur to a person and haunt him for a long time. But it is superfluous to enlarge upon this point, because the frequent case of our being haunted by a melody that has no text, by a passage from a symphony, some bars from a violin concerto, proves sufficiently that the text cannot possibly be the only determining factor in the process and that the

[7] Compare the chapter on the choice of text in Julius Bahle, *Der musikalische Schaffensprocess* (Leipzig, 1936).

[8] Arnold Schönberg *zum 60. Geburtstag* (Wien, 1934), p. 13.

Freudian explanation cannot be sufficient to understand the phenomenon.

Something not expressed in the text or not adequately expressed in it manifests itself in the melody. When I am singing a melody that haunts me, I am expressing emotions. It has the same meaning as when I am laughing, crying, sighing or sobbing. It is the same as tears, sneers or Bronx cheers.

But where do we go from here? It would now be necessary to present a psychological theory of what comprises the emotional character as well as the esthetic value of music, to probe into the mystery of why certain sound waves affect us this way and others in that way. It means it would be necessary to enter the realm of musical theory, including the science of acoustics. At this point, I again become painfully aware of my incompetence. I am as equipped for entering the glacial areas of abstract music theory as a pedestrian in a summer suit is prepared to undertake an expedition to the North Pole. Dissatisfied, even disgusted with myself, I shall break off the attempt to find a general solution to the problem of the haunting melody. I can only express the hope that a psychoanalyst who has extensive knowledge in the field of musical and acoustic theory, and a wide experience in this area, will pick up the thread at this point and bring the problem to a solution. I must admit to myself that I have failed again because I have been too ambitious.

TWO

There is more than one tiny shoot on a bough. While I was studying the psychological and musicological literature in an unsuccessful search for information about the question of the haunting melody, I tried to recall the first impression I got from Mahler's Second Symphony. I had heard it the first time in November, 1907. Mahler himself conducted. It was his last concert in Vienna. Four weeks later he went to America.

I close my eyes and I imagine being again a nineteen-year-old student, in the standing-room section of the Vienna Musikvereinssaal. The over-ornamented hall with the powerful caryatids supporting the ceiling and the big chandelier. The orchestra, the women and men of the choir. The musicians were waiting. Quietness before

the tempest. And then the small figure of Mahler who storms between violinists and flutists to his desk. He raises the baton. . . . No, it is impossible to reproduce the impression of that first hearing. I have to wait until the Second Symphony is performed again.

The occasion came soon, I think even in the same year. I heard once more the funeral march of the first movement as it rises sharp from the restless basses, the lament in the wood-wind, the crowding of the motifs, the lovely dance tune of the second movement, in its character and charm reminiscent of Schubert's *Ländlers,* the tireless progression of the Scherzo, its buffoonery and its sinister and gloomy rise and fall, the song *Urlicht* (Primal Light) in its delicate weaving and the gigantic final movement, bringing its message of resurrection and ending with the peal of organ and bells amid the jubilation of the orchestra. The impression was, of course, not so strong as at the first hearing. But there was a conspicuous difference. The last movement had deeply stirred me at the first hearing. Now I still felt its emotional appeal, but it seemed its power has been considerably diminished in the meantime. I remembered that the chorale, that hymn "Rise again," which had haunted me in the Christmas week, did not make nearly the same impression as before. Something in me must have changed in the meantime. In the twenty-five years since then I have heard the Second Symphony several times and have observed that that last movement, and especially the chorale, has become less and less impressive. Now it seems to me that it is perhaps the weakest movement in all the symphonies of Mahler. I still remember that I remained under its spell for some days when I first heard it as a student of nineteen years. I did not understand why its emotional appeal became weaker until I could recognize what unconscious tendencies had been responsible for the power it once had over me.

There is an odd mixture of compliance and stubbornness in my character. I often yield to a combination of difficulties in order to approach them later on with increased energy. Self-observation has shown me that sometimes I seem to renounce an action while, in reality—sometimes to my own surprise—I stubbornly try to attain it on a detour. It is as if I am following the advice of that French proverb to run a track back in order to jump higher *(Reculez pour sauter mieux!).*

This pattern of behavior also manifested itself in the search for

the unconscious reasons for the emergence of the haunting melody. It began quite inconspicuously. Starting with the program notes of that concert in 1926, in which some biographical data on Mahler were presented, I began to read everything easily available about the Second Symphony. Very soon this reading extended itself to include not only all his symphonies and songs, but his professional career and his private life. I became aware of some purpose in this reading when I caught myself making some notes about data in Mahler's life. If it was just a fleeting interest, why should I wish to make excerpts from an article? I recognized then that I had not given up the plan to find out why that chorale had haunted me.

In the quarter of a century since, I have read all I could lay my hands on about the life and work of Gustav Mahler, collected books and articles about him, cut papers out from magazines and jotted down remarks and data from friends and acquaintances of his. I have ransacked the libraries of Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris, London and New York for material about the composer. Many folders were filled with this material, some of which was lost on the flight from Nazi Germany. Such industry was astonishing to myself. It was as if I planned to collect material for a biography of the composer. Nothing of this kind was in my mind. I wanted only to solve the riddle of the haunting melody, but I continued my collecting of material even after I had succeeded in discovering the hidden sources of that obsession. These readings and collectings themselves seemed to have obtained a compulsive character. My industry, however, resulted in my finding some unknown and even some unpublished material about Mahler's work and life which will prove useful to future biographers and musicologists. I'll refer to and quote from this material in the following chapters.

The first object of my interest was the fact that there were program notes to the Second Symphony, notes which the composer himself had several times presented. Mahler's point of view concerning the question of a program is clearly formulated in a letter to Max Marschalk: "I know that as far as I can shape an inner experience in words, I certainly would not write any music about it. My need to express myself musically and symphonically starts only where the dark emotions begin, at the door leading to the 'other world,' the world in which things are not any more separated by time and place. Just as I consider it an insipidity to invent music to a program, I

feel it is unsatisfactory and sterile to wish to equip a musical composition with a program."[9] In spite of such opposition, Mahler gives a program of his Second Symphony to his friend. The first movement is called Funeral Celebration. In it the hero of the First Symphony is borne to his grave. At his coffin the question will be asked: Why has he lived and died? Is all life only a great, terrible mockery? The composer gives his answer to his problem in his last movement. The second and third movements are conceived as interludes, the second as memory of a happy time "from the life of this hero." Mahler presents this content in his letter thus: "It happened that you were at the burial of a person dear to you and then on the way back suddenly the image of an hour of happiness, long passed, emerged. This image has an effect similar to a ray of sun: you can almost forget what just happened. When then the daydreamer awakens from his fantasy and returns to life, it may be that the unceasingly moving, never understandable hustle of life becomes ghastly as the moving of dancing figures in an illuminated dance hall into which you look from the dark night, from so far away that you cannot hear the music. The turning and moving of the couples appears then to be senseless as the rhythm clue is missing." The third movement is called *Urlicht* (Primal Light). The soul longs for redemption. The contralto solo sings a song from Arnim and Brentano's collection of German folk poetry:

> I am from God, I will go to God!
> The merciful God, the merciful God,
> a candle will be sending
> To light my way unto a blessed life unending.

While the first three movements tell the story, the last one is all inner experience. Mahler himself described this vision to a friend in January, 1896. "It starts with the cry of dying and now comes the solution of the terrible problem of life, at first as faith and church shaped it in the beyond. A trembling moves over the earth. Listen to the roll of the drums and your hair will stand on end! The Great Summons sounds. The graves open and all creatures emerge from the soil, shrieking and with chattering teeth. Now they all come a-marching: beggars and wealthy men, common people and kings,

[9] March 26, 1896 (Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler*, p. 186).

the *ecclesia militans*, the popes. With all of them the same anxiety, shouting and quivering with fear, because none is just before God. Between it again and again—as if from the other world—from beyond the Great Summons. Finally, after all had cried out in the worst turmoil only the long-lasting voice of the death-bird from the last grave. It also becomes silent at last. And now nothing of all that which was dreaded comes: no last judgment, no blessed and no damned. None is good, none bad—no judge. Low and simple the chorale sets in: Rise, yes, rise . . ."

A comparison of the interpretation which the composer gave to the music critic, Max Marschalk, in his letter, and the one he told to his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner three months before, shows that there was a change in his thought. In his explanation in January, 1896, the first movement "contains the gigantic struggle of a colossal man with life and destiny to which he succumbs again and again and his death." The second and third movement, Andante and Scherzo, are episodes from the life of the fallen hero. The last movement presents his redemption. This version is the symphonic tale of a life, and at the end the hope and finally the certainty of redemption.

In these three months the character of this concept has changed. It is no longer a presentation of the hero's life, but its mirroring in the mind of a survivor, a relative or friend who returns from the grave, recalls the story of the deceased's life and is by his recollections led to metaphysical questions in his thoughts: Why did you live? Why did you suffer? What is the sense of life? Questions to which an answer is given in the last movement. In other words, the original concept is now put into another frame. It is as if one's own life and emotions were looked at by an observer, and this onlooker ties metaphysical reflections to a review of this other life. The difference in the technique of presentation becomes transparent by a comparison from the literary field, for instance between a novel in the "I" form and another in which, as in many stories of Somerset Maugham, the storyteller meets an old friend after many years and this man tells him about an experience he has had in the meantime. The "I" form of the presentation is kept, but the storyteller, the I, is only a recorder or observer.[10] Although he sometimes speaks of his own opinions or emotions, he remains an episodic figure, while

[10] Compare some stories from the collection *East And West*.

the often unheroic hero experiences a tragic, comic or tragi-comical destiny. It is psychologically recognizable that this I, this recorder, tells either a past experience of his own at which he now looks from a birth-eye view or presents a potentiality of his own which never actually became a reality in his life.

The psychological advantages of this technique of presentation—not to mention the artistic ones—are that it allows the storyteller a detachment from, and even sometimes a kind of emotional aloofness toward, his own experience or a past potentiality of his destiny. The person of the writer appears, thus, psychologically split into two figures, the I, the storyteller, and the Me, the acting or suffering character. One can assume that this technique of presentation is appropriate to the self-observing or introspective side of the writer.

In the second version of the program of the Symphony in C, Mahler tries to shift the experience and emotions of the hero to a friend who is a thoughtful witness. He tries to make a unity of the concept, but does not fully succeed in doing this. What a strange succession! The symphony begins with the death of the symphonic hero and develops regressively, returns to the time of his young love, describes his disappointment in love and life. "The spirit of negation," as Mahler said about the content of the Scherzo, has taken hold of him. The next movements express hope and then present the vision of Judgment Day, with the message that there is no retribution or punishment and suffering will find its reward. The reader of the program cannot be sure whether the life of the deceased is directly pictured (after his death) or whether a friend or relative reflects on this life, whether the emotions and problems are the fallen hero's or those of the survivor and observer. There is a fusion and confusion, as well as an overlapping from the present, the past and the future. All this makes little sense. It seems as if the hero dies and then reflects on the meaning of life or broods about the solution of life's great mysteries after having died. Our biographical knowledge becomes useful here: we know from Mahler himself that he composed the first movement of the symphony, that celebration of death "without thinking of a continuation."[11] Yes, the idea of the death of the hero and of that funeral march is separated from the other movements by months, even by years. The composition of this funeral

[11] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler* (Wien, 1923), p. 116.

march and of the mournful song at the burial was originally a single and completed work before Mahler ever thought of a continuation.

But this allows only one conclusion, namely, that the composer, then in his early thirties, was intensely preoccupied with thoughts about the problem of death or, if we admit that there is at least an emotional identity between composer and symphonic hero, with thoughts about his own death. We have to understand then that this intellectual preoccupation with the death problem was not the end, but the beginning of the emotional crisis presented in the symphony. In other words, the problems of life, of love, of achievement and failure, of happiness and fame are seen from the viewpoint of death. Bruno Walter, who was a friend of the composer, states that Mahler's symphonies are conceived *"sub specie mortis."*[12] And now it occurs to us how many of his symphonic movements start with the experience of death and how many end there.

Mahler stated, in the letter to Marschalk I have already mentioned, that the hero of this symphony is identical with that of his first symphony, which ends with the fall and the triumph of this hero. But why search for circumstantial evidence for the intellectual intensity with which Mahler's thoughts circle around the problem of his death, if we have the proof of his own words, his own testimony? Mahler tells his friend Natalie that he had a strange experience while he composed that funeral march of the Second Symphony. He suddenly saw himself as a body laid out amongst the flowers and wreaths which had been sent to his room after the opera performances he had conducted.[13] Is this not proof enough that the composer anticipated his own death in his thoughts? It is certainly not too daring to interpret the fact that he thought that he would then, after his death, be recognized as a composer, as the artist who created a new expression of an emotional experience, just in the symphony on which he was then working. The wreaths and flowers in his room were a sign of his triumphs as a conductor, but almost nobody knew of his own symphonic compositions. Is it too venturesome to assume that he anticipated this future appreciation while he worked on this movement of Beethovenian power and intensity of emotions?

A short time afterwards he said to the same friend, "You will see: I shall not live long enough to experience the victory of my compositions . . . People do not yet understand my language."[14] Again and again we meet in his conversations and in his letters this conviction that he would not be appreciated as a composer during his life, and also his belief that his symphonies would be welcomed in later times. "One need not be present any more when one becomes immortal," he once said.

[12] Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler* (Wien-Zürich, 1936).
[13] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

His own anticipated death was thus the point of departure for those other questions: "What is the meaning of life? Why so much suffering? Is there a reward or punishment in the beyond? Is there a beyond and do we and our souls survive?" Such questions occupied the composer's thoughts, such problems, especially those of the meaning of human existence, often made him restless and depressed. To quote only one representative instance of those reflections, Bruno Walter reports that Mahler once complained, "On what dark subsoil is our life built!" and then began haltingly to speak about the puzzling aspects of human life. "Whence do we come? Where does our way lead? Did I really, as Schopenhauer thinks, will this life before I was begotten? Why do I believe myself to be free and yet am wedged into my character as into a prison? What is the purpose of trouble and suffering? How can I understand cruelty and maliciousness in the creation of a kind God? Will the meaning of life finally be revealed in death?" Bruno Walter and many other friends report that this "Why?" remained the tormenting problem of his mental life, and the most intense emotional impulses of his creativeness sprang from this soil. Each of his symphonies was a new attempt at an answer. "And when he had arrived at an answer, the same question rose soon anew as an unquenchable cry of longing. He could not—such was his nature—hold positions conquered, because he was not constant."[15]

But here the insight we acquired in many years of psychoanalytic practice makes us understand what these characteristic features mean, and this writer could add many hundreds of biographical details as circumstantial evidence. They are significant symptomatic expressions of a special emotional and mental attitude which psychiatry recognizes as obsessional. An incessant mental preoccupation with problems whose very nature makes them impossible of solution by reasoning, like the questions of the meaning of life, of survival

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[15] Bruno Walter, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

and the beyond, of the purpose of evil, the nature of death and so on, is one of the characteristic symptoms of obsessional neurotic patients and obsessional characters.

But what had I gained in recognizing the obsessional features in the composer's character? I asked myself. I was puzzled at the interest I took in the various interpretations of the Second Symphony which its composer gave to his friends. I was in danger of getting involved in musicological and music-psychological questions whose answers were unattainable by me who had so little knowledge of music. I wanted to find an answer to only one special question—why that chorale melody had haunted me—and it seemed I was drifting into a psychoanalytic study of the personality of Gustav Mahler. I became aware that I tried to reach a solution of the puzzle on a detour, as a direct approach had proved inaccessible. It seemed that I wished to find out what the composer thought and felt when he was inspired to conceive the resurrection tune and after having solved that problem to return to my own little question.

It was a moment of reflection and deliberation. The result at which I had arrived, namely, the recognition of obsessional features in Mahler's production, was interesting, it is true, from a psychoanalytic point of view. But did it justify the work, the reading and the scrutiny of so many sources? Was so tiny a result worth so much trouble? It was like searching tons of ore in order to find a milligram of radium. But now it was too late. I had to drive on. There was no possibility of a retrogressive movement. The best I could hope for was to continue driving on this road and then make a U-turn back. The next question was: Which personal experience inspired Mahler to compose that chorale?

CHAPTER XIX

In Search of the Finale

ONE

A CONTEMPORARY CRITIC once called Hans von Bülow the "Pope" of music, and Bülow was indeed considered the great authority as conductor and critic. The man to whom we owe the first performance of the *Meistersinger* and of *Tristan*, the man who courageously broke with respected traditions of conducting, had been celebrated in the musical world all over Europe. We know that Mahler, who had heard Bülow in a concert in 1883, was full of enthusiasm for the master and asked him in a letter, which Paul Stefan discovered in Kassel, to accept him as a pupil. When, seven years later, Mahler became conductor at the Stadttheater in Hamburg, where Bülow then lived, he very soon awakened the interest of the famous musician. Bülow began to admire the conductor, who was thirty years younger than he, and frequently attended the performances led by Mahler. Once he sat in the first row and demonstratively applauded the young conductor who had brought the house down. Bülow, who had apparently not noticed when the public left the house, continued to applaud until Mahler had to bow to the man who remained alone in the theater.

Mahler wrote to his old friend Dr. Fritz Löhr in 1892 about Bülow, whose concerts he regularly attended: "It is comical how in his abstruse manner he treats me with marked respect at every occasion in a conspicuous way *coram publico*. He flirts with me (I am

sitting in the first row) at each beautiful passage. From his conductor's stand he presents the scores of the most unknown compositions to me so that I can read them during the performance. As soon as he sees me, he bows to me conspicuously. Sometimes he speaks to me from the podium and so on." When Mahler conducted *Fidelio,* he received twenty-seven wreaths, the most beautiful with the inscription: "To the Pygmalion of the Hamburg Opera in sincere admiration, Hans von Bülow." When Bülow became ill in December, 1892, Mahler conducted in his place the next concert of the Vereines Hamburger Musikfreunde. Bülow's illness got worse, he resigned and recommended Mahler as his successor.

The relationship of the two men was obviously that of master and disciple. Mahler admired Bülow, and often quoted the famous conductor after his death. Bülow, on the other hand, had such confidence in Mahler's talent as a conductor that he always suggested him as his substitute when he himself could not conduct.

So far all was in most beautiful harmony and remained harmonious. There were, however, some dissonances. They can be recognized in some official letters of Bülow to Mahler and in previously unknown letters of Mahler to his sister Justine.[1] Mahler writes, for instance: "The other day I was quite excited. A messenger from Bülow arrived and in his name asked me to conduct the next concert for him because he was seriously ill. I was immediately ready and prepared a beautiful program. As soon as Bülow saw it, he declared himself to be all right again, and so on."

The discord became most perceptible in the area of Mahler's compositions. A singer had announced that she would sing two songs by Mahler in one of the concerts conducted by Bülow. He wrote to Mahler that several and not superficial attempts at understanding and feeling Mahler's peculiar style had failed, and he would prefer that the composer should conduct his songs himself. From a letter of Mahler to his sister in October, 1892: "Herr von Bülow was again kind enough not to accept them on account of their 'peculiar style.' Is this not once again a very friendly encouragement 'for joyful creation'?" The undertone of disappointment and bitterness in this passage is unmistakable.

[1] I discovered an article "Mahler and Hans von Bülow" in the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* (Sept. 17, 1929), in which Alfred Rose quotes some of Mahler's letters which have remained unknown. The passages quoted above are taken from this article.

Against the emotional background here sketched, the following description of a scene between Bülow and Mahler appears highly significant. In the same letter to the friend of his youth, Fritz Löhr, in which he reports the many compliments of Bülow (December, 1891), Mahler complains that an attempt to obtain a performance of one of his works had failed.[2] The young composer played to the master his *Totenfeier* (this was the name given to the composition that later on formed the first movement of the Second Symphony). Bülow got into a state of nervous panic and "declared that *Tristan,* compared with my composition, is a Haydn symphony and carried on like a lunatic. You see," continued Mahler, addressing his old friend Fritz, "I already begin to believe: either my compositions are abstruse nonsense or—well, complete it and choose yourself! I am fed up with it."

We have a second report of the same scene, also by Mahler himself. In a conversation with another composer, Josef B. Förster, with whom he liked to discuss musical questions, he speaks of the same scene.[3] He had just played to the friend the same memorial movement on the piano. (The composition was then conceived as a complete and independent work.) He described how he had shown the score some time before to Bülow, whom Förster also knew. The old conductor said, "Play it to me! The score is complicated and in this way I would hear it in an authentic concept." Mahler sat down at the piano and played. "Once I accidentally turned around and saw that Bülow had closed his ears with his hands. I immediately stopped playing, of course. 'Go on, play on!' Bülow shouted. I continued and saw after a while that the maestro had again closed his ears. The intermezzo is repeated; Bülow again demanded that I should play on. Now I play the composition to the end. At the beginning I was still out of humor, embarrassed, considering whether Bülow perhaps did not like my playing or whether the frequent forte affected him unpleasantly, since I knew that he often complained about headaches. Later on, carried along by the music, I forgot everything, including Bülow's presence. When I had finished, I was, of course, silent and waited to hear what the master would say. Bülow was also

[2] Gustav Mahler, *Briefe.* Herausgegeben von Alma Maria Mahler (Wien, 1924), p. 97.

[3] Josef B. Förster, "Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (April, 1920), p. 293.

silent for a time, then he turned to me with a negative gesture, and said, 'If this is still music, I don't understand anything of music any more.' We separated quite amicably, nevertheless, though I was conscious that Bülow appreciated me as a conductor, but not as a composer."

We have here two reports of the same scene: a short one in the letter to Fritz, the friend of his student years, and a detailed one in the conversation which Förster related. It is interesting to compare the two reports. The letter presents a sketch of the incident, while the story which Mahler tells Förster gives a detailed picture. The documentary value of the letter to Löhr is, of course, higher than the report because it refers to a recent event when it speaks of the playing of the memorial movement to Bülow.[4] A year later, in 1892, Josef B. Förster came to Hamburg where he made Mahler's acquaintance and as he himself reports, only slowly became more familiar with the young conductor. Förster remarked that Mahler told him about the scene with Bülow much later.

The tone of the letter to the old friend is, of course, much less restrained and freer than the report Mahler gives to Förster. There is at least some criticism of Bülow's behavior ("carried on like a lunatic," "his abstruse manner"). There is scarcely any trace of an emotional reaction in the conversation with Förster. After Bülow had expressed that annihilating opinion about the composition he had just heard, he and Mahler "separated, quite amicably, nevertheless." The word "nevertheless" is not so much an allusion to a concealed emotion as its expression. The description of the scene in the letter reveals, of course, the intimacy between Mahler and his friend, but even here there is no more than a trace of an expressed emotion.

We would expect words of deep disappointment or depression. It is certainly an important event! A young composer has played his new work, which he considers his best, to the most famous conductor of his time, to the critic whose opinion was law in the musical world, and this man crushed all the hopes of the young artist. Even if the composer had very strong self-confidence and if his belief in his work remained unshaken by the annihilating judgment he had to hear—would we not expect expressions of bitterness, defiance or rage?

[4] The letter is not dated. Many of Mahler's letters are not, but the addressee, Dr. Löhr, assumes that it was written in December, 1891.

What happened to the emotion, which we have to assume with a young and ambitious composer? "We separated quite amicably, nevertheless; though I was conscious that Bülow appreciated me as conductor, but not as composer." Is such the language of a thirty-one-year-old man of genius, of a most explosive temperament, and one consumed by ambition, when he speaks of the most cruel disappointment of his young life?

TWO

When the twenty-three-year-old conductor Gustav Mahler heard a concert conducted by Hans von Bülow, he wrote the master a letter full of youthful enthusiasm, almost of adoration. To quote a few passages from it: "When I requested an interview, I did not yet know what fire you would set to my soul by your incomparable art. . . . When I saw the most beautiful I had guessed and hoped in the concert yesterday, it became clear to me: here is your country—this is your master—your wanderings will end now or never! . . . I surrender entirely to you and if you would accept this gift, nothing could make me more happy."

The answer to this courting letter, dated January 28, 1884, was polite and cool. Eight years later Mahler had made a splendid career; he was conductor of the Hamburg Stadttheater. We have already reported how Hans von Bülow, who then lived in Hamburg, now became an admirer of the young conductor. We have already heard that Mahler took Bülow's place when the master became ill, and that the young conductor led the Abonnementkonzerte when Bülow resigned. Bülow died on February 12, 1894, in Cairo, where he was sent because the physicians hoped the climate of Africa would improve his state of health. Mahler conducted the next concert which was conceived as a memorial for Bülow.[5]

But, in the meantime, what happened to the symphony? Was Mahler intimidated by Bülow's severe judgment? It seems not, because he must have decided to make that Funeral Celebration, which

[5] Mahler conducted the *Deutsche Requiem*, the *Eroica* and the *Third Leonoren-Ouvertüre*. In his memorial speech, Dr. Hermann Behn said: "We thank conductor Mahler with all our heart that he conveyed to us this creation in a way worthy of the deceased master. Mr. Mahler has rendered honor to himself as well as to the artist who passed away. . . ." *(Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, February.)

was conceived as an independent composition, the first movement of a symphony. He worked on the composition during the summer months when he was on vacation. We know that he composed the second movement, the beautiful Andante, and the third movement, the brilliant Scherzo, in Steinach at the Attersee. He then inserted the third movement, the Alt-Solo, using a song he had composed some years before. During the summer of 1893, he worked on the last movement, on the great medieval vision of the Last Judgment Day. The composition of this movement put him into such a state of nervous excitement that "his sisters were worried about his health and almost wished he would stop composing."[6] In 1893 he returned from the summer vacation to Hamburg and his conductor's position without having finished the symphony.

Where was the difficulty and what was responsible for the inhibition of the creative work? Mahler could not find an answer to the questions he had put in the first movement. All attempts at reaching a finale that would be adequate to that powerful first movement failed. In a letter to Arthur Seidl (February 17, 1897), Mahler himself relates the experience which brought the solution of this problem, and he considers it very significant how he got the inspiration for the finale. He had long planned to introduce the chorus in the last movement, because he had come to the point where he had to make the word the bearer of the idea. "I really looked through all the world's literature, even the Bible, to find the redeeming word—and was finally forced to express my feelings and thoughts in my own words. . . . Just then Bülow died, and I attended the memorial service for him here. The mood in which I sat there and thought of the departed one was exactly that of the work which, at that time, occupied me constantly—at that moment, the chorus near the organ intoned the Klopstock chorale *Auferstehn!* It struck me like a bolt of lightning and everything stood clear and vivid before my soul. The creator waits for this bolt of lightning; this is his 'Holy Annunciation.' What I then experienced, I had now to shape into tones. And yet, if I had not carried that idea with me, how could I have experienced it? There were a thousand people with me in the church at that moment."[7]

[6] I take this biographical detail from an article "Aus Mahlers Sturm und Drangperiode" by Alfred Rose, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (October 5, 1928).

[7] Gustav Mahler's *Briefe*, p. 228.

Here is one of the rare occasions that allows the psychologist to obtain an insight into the mysterious process of artistic inspiration. Was it accident that Mahler had this inspiration, after having searched so long in vain for a finale to his symphony, at the funeral service for the admired and revered master? If it was accident, Mahler at least conceived of it as a deeply significant coincidence, a mystic oracle. He saw here a hint from destiny.

The thoughts and the emotions of the symphony circled around the problem of the meaning of life. The death of the symphonic hero in the first movement led to these thoughts, brought back memories of his youth, of his disappointments and sufferings, of doubts, despair and disgust at life. The last movement anticipates the solution of the great mystery concerning the meaning of life from the beyond. Here a free-floating guilt feeling and the fear of punishment find their expression in the anxiety about what will happen on Judgment Day and in the hereafter.

"The mood in which I sat there and thought of the departed was exactly that of the work which at that time occupied me constantly," writes Mahler in that letter. And indeed it did. Here was the funeral celebration for a man to whom Mahler owed so much, who had not only been his model as conductor and interpreter of great classical music, but who had given public testimony of his appreciation and admiration for his young colleague, and who had suggested that he should become his successor. But the situation itself stimulated those thoughts and emotions expressed in the symphony: it reminded the listener of the transitoriness of life and reawakened that question of its meaning. It not only aroused the old doubts and reflections as to whether life is senseless and all suffering vain, but also that other one of the value of achievement. The intense feelings awakened by the death of the admired master were joined with other ones that had preoccupied the composer so long before, feelings and thoughts about his own life and aspirations.

When the chorale of those Klopstock verses "You will rise again!" was intoned, it was as if the departed himself had sent a message to the composer. In those simple lines was the solution for which Mahler had searched so long. The boys' choir sounded like a greeting from the beyond. No, life and suffering are not in vain. If one had striven and achieved as much as Bülow, one could be certain of immortality. It is in the line of the emotional development that Mahler

interpreted the coincidence of that chorale in this moment as of a mystical or mysterious sign, if not as of a miracle. The memorial service for his revered old friend and benefactor brought the answer in the form of that consoling chorale of resurrection. The tension that had been mounting in the last months had heen suddenly relaxed.

In Mahler's description of the scene at the church, three moments are clearly differentiated: the occasion that corresponded to the emotions and ideas of the Second Symphony, the surprise at the intonation of the chorale of the children *Aufersteh'n* and the psychical element of readiness. With a penetration admirable in an observer not trained in psychological investigation, Mahler put the factor of surprise beside that of emotional preparation as if he guessed that there is a bridge between them.

The intonation of the Klopstock chorale struck him like a bolt of lightning, but he adds immediately, "And yet, if I had not carried that idea with me, how could I have experienced it?" Maybe it will sound paradoxical when I assert that there is a feeling of familiarity or recognition in or immediately after surprise. This means that shortly after the emotion of surprise has ebbed away, the feeling frequently appears that the person has already for a long time guessed "it" will happen or happen in this way. Such a paradoxical feeling would be incomprehensible if a certain emotional preparedness were not an irremissible premise for the experience of surprise. In a book published in 1929,[8] I attempted to demonstrate that this connection is psychologically easy to understand. There I characterized surprise as a realization of an unconscious expectation. An event will affect me as surprise when I have unconsciously expected it a long time before and when it happens at an unexpected moment under changed circumstances or in an unrecognizable form.

In this case where is the expectation that had become unconscious and appeared suddenly realized? The answer will, of course, refer to the intonation of the boys' chorale, *Aufersteh'n*, which brought the solution of the symphonic problem in an unexpected moment. But this answer secures a hint only to an external event, and does not explain the emotion of the mysterious which Mahler felt in it and the intense effect the chorale had upon him.

Where is the moment of inner preparedness, of readiness for the

[8] *Der Schrecken* (Wien and Leipzig). Not translated into English.

inspiration? Should we assume with the biographers (for instance, with Paul Stefan, *Gustav Mahler* [München, 1912], p. 35) that the singing of the chorale was "as if the spirit of the departed had once again greeted his friend," and be content with the information that there had been other "inspirations, visions, dreams in which, as it were, the beyond spoke" in the compositor's creation? I am rather skeptical about such easy connections with the beyond which remains uncommunicative with us other lesser mortals.

We would understand such a supernatural act or message better if the dear departed one had been admiring or at least appreciative toward the compositions of his young successor. But we have heard how he had a decidedly critical and sharply hostile attitude to the first movement of this symphony when Mahler played it to him. It is hard to imagine that a short time in the beyond had changed Bülow's musical taste and judgment so radically that he was instrumental in securing the still missing finale of the symphony. No, unlike that enthusiastic biographer, I cannot imagine Bülow's hand reaching helpfully out from the beyond. I prefer a psychological explanation of the mysterious experience.

But has not the memory of that playing of the Funeral Celebration which took place three years before pointed in a direction where such an explanation can be found? Only a few steps into the area of unconscious emotions are needed, only a few gaps have to be filled to reach a psychological reconstruction of what happened in Mahler when he experienced that inspiration in the church.

We remember how the young composer reacted to the deep disappointment when Bülow expressed his unconditional rejection of that funeral march which became the first movement of the symphony. We were astonished at the fact that Mahler, in his letters and conversations, shows such a lack of bitterness or depression, of disappointment or rage, and we asked ourselves what happened to those emotions. The answer is: They went underground, were suppressed, brushed aside or disavowed. These feelings came in conflict with Mahler's respect and admiration for the famous conductor and critic. Gratitude to the man who had been so kind to Mahler and had so often expressed his appreciation for him intensified those opposite tendencies. Even self-interest forbade a free expression of rebellious feelings against Bülow, upon whose benevolence so much depended for the young conductor.

When Mahler attended the commemorative service, feelings of mourning and regret, the awareness of the loss of a friend, were certainly felt. At some point during the celebration which brought those old problems of the meaning of life and death back to mind, Mahler must have thought again of the scene three years before in which he had played that composition to the master. That was perhaps while he listened to the boys singing the song by Bach, *"Wenn ich einmal muss scheiden"* ("When I once have to pass away"), which preceded the Klopstock chorale and which awakened the thought of his own death.

With the memory of the scene of the playing to Bülow, the old emotions, once deeply felt, were revivified and awakened in their old intensity. They must have been of ferocious rage and rebellion against Bülow. Their continuation into the unconscious area must have resulted in the emergence of an intense death wish against the admired man, a death wish which must have recurred whenever in the following years Bülow showed that he did not appreciate Mahler as a composer.

When during the service, along with the memory of that disappointing scene, the death wish re-emerged from the unconscious, it was, of course, in connection with the negative reception of Mahler's composition three years before. When Mahler heard the annihilating judgment, an impulse of rage and fury in the form, "I wish you would drop dead," must have been associated with a tendency of intense defiance and rebellion: I shall succeed as a composer in spite of you. His subsequent actions speak louder than his words. He continued the composition of the symphony, finished the Andante and the Scherzo, the second and the third movements, as if Bülow's opinion did not matter. Then followed that long pause in which Mahler could not find the solution of the symphonic problem, a phase in which his creative production was blocked. The doubt which we assume as the determining factor in this creative inhibition was centered around the problem of an appropriate text for the final movement, and we know from Mahler's letter that he looked through literature to find the "redeeming word."

While Mahler attended the service in the church, together with the memory of the scene of playing to Bülow and of his hard judgment, the memory trace of the death wish against the master must have emerged. There was the knowledge that Bülow was dead, that

the young composer just at this moment sat at the service for the man who had condemned his composition. It was as if that repressed death wish had been realized by destiny, no, more than this, as if Bülow had at last died because Mahler had wished him to die. There was for a moment a feeling of satisfaction about the power of his own thought or wish, only to be suppressed in the next minute. This triumphant feeling about the removal of the antagonist and critic, of the admired and hated rival, this satisfaction about his fall was quickly suppressed, but it had not vanished. It had emerged from the subsoil of defiance and rebellion, and was at its roots associated with the hope that the symphony would be finished and become a masterwork.

The satisfaction about the power of his wishes remained alive and lingered on. When the boys' choir intoned that chorale, the concealed emotion was transferred to this text. But here was the solution Mahler had searched for so long! No douht, the first sentences of that chorale lend themselves very well to be used as redeeming words: they express the certainty that all striving is not in vain, that resurrection and salvation are certain. But it was not accident that brought the solution, that text, just at this moment! The satisfaction about that achievement of the power of one's wish which had, so to speak, "killed" Bülow, was now transferred to the fact that the text of that chorale contained verses very appropriate for the finale. Brought into a formula which necessarily simplifies the mental process, the death of Bülow became not only the premise, but the promise of Mahler's belief that his symphony would be successfully finished. The unconscious thought process can be reconstructed according to the pattern we so often recognize in obsessional thinking. It is as if Mahler had thought: *As my unconscious wish that you who rejected me as a composer should die was fulfilled, so my symphony will be finished and become a masterwork.* When Bülow had expressed that hard judgment about Mahler's composition three years before, he was, so to speak, already potentially a dead man, killed by the unconscious fury and revenge of the hurt and rejected artist. But now that thought was fulfilled in material reality. The unconscious certainty that one's wish could kill an enemy was now displaced to the certainty that one had found the solution of the symphonic problem at the very funeral service for the admired and hated man who had blocked one's way.

It was as if Mahler could be certain of the value of his achievement only if Bülow, who had condemned his work, would die. The critic was dead, the work will live forever. The displacement of the pride about his own wishful thinking, which had in his imagination brought about Bülow's death, to the finishing of the symphony was accomplished with the help of the text sung at the memorial service of his most important antagonist. What a triumph for oneself and what a triumph over him! His defeat was not only the premise of his victory, but also its promise, almost its initial phase since the chorale became the means of the finale. No doubt, the coincidence was conceived of and welcomed by Mahler in the sense that now he would obtain fame. His way went over the body of an admired and hated enemy.

Not the intonation of the chorus struck Mahler "like a bolt of lightning," but the unconscious recognition that his wish had the power to kill the antagonist who had been an obstacle in his way. The great impression the Klopstock verses made upon him at this moment is psychologically understandable. An external event coincided with the realization of an unconscious expectation. The effect of that surprise, the "Holy Annunciation" which Mahler mentions, is due to the fulfillment of a hope unconsciously nourished for a long time and displaced from the death wish to the wish to find an appropriate text for the finale of the symphony.

It is remarkable that the death of a respected and admired man became for Mahler the premise for the finishing of his symphony. Here we become aware of the psychological importance that the removal of a person who has become the object of ambivalence of feelings has for success and failure in the field of artistic achievement.

Mahler hitched his wagon to a star, but with the unconscious purpose of pulling the star down and becoming one himself.

CHAPTER XX

Interlude

ONE

THE PRECEDING CHAPTER contained the appalling statement that Mahler unconsciously wished that his admired model, Hans von Bülow, would die, that he later on imagined Bülow had died because of this wish and that his satisfaction over the power of his thought was displaced to the value and success of the Second Symphony. The reconstructed train of unconscious thought is as follows: As certain as you are now dead because I wished it, will my work, which you rejected, be victorious and become immortal. The fact that these verses were sung at the memorial service for Bülow was interpreted as a coincidental confirmation of Mahler's tremendous power of thought. In a transference of this belief in the power of his wishes those very verses were used as text for the finale of his symphony. Is there any proof for such a monstrous statement? It seems to me that there cannot be any proof for psychological statements of this sort, any proof, that is, in the strict sense of mathematical and physical demonstration. One can only try to make it probable to such a degree that the presentation takes on the character of evidence for any person who has psychological understanding.

There is an abundance of material in Mahler's letters and memories of conversations with contemporaries which proves that Mahler believed in omens and oracles, and in little signs anticipating future

events in the typical manner of obsessional neurotics. We have Mahler's own words for it, in his letter to Dr. Arthur Seidl, that he conceived of his experience in the church as of a mysterious, if not mystical event.

But where is the evidence that Mahler thought at that service of the scene in which he had played his composition to Bülow a few years before? Mahler says only in that letter that the mood in which he sat there and thought of the departed "was exactly that of the work which occupied me constantly then." If any more evidence is needed that with such thoughts the memory of that humiliating scene also emerged, we can easily provide it, although it can necessarily be only of an indirect kind. Had the Hamburg Senate not invited the guests to a *Totenfeier* (Memorial Service) for Bülow and was not *Totenfeier* the title Mahler had given to that originally independent composition he had submitted for Bülow's judgment? The memory of that event was inescapable, if for no other reason than the identity of the name given to the occasion. But we have more and more conclusive evidence. Josef B. Förster, to whom we owe valuable memories of that time in Hamburg when he was Mahler's friend, has told us that Mahler played that *Totenfeier* to him which later on formed the first movement of the symphony. The two composers had then discussed the difficulty in building a finale appropriate to this powerful movement which grows to enormous dimensions. Many months passed. Then, on February 19, 1894, the announcement of Bülow's death in Cairo arrived. Förster reports[1] that he asked Mahler to play the funeral march of the first movement again, this time in memory of the great and loved master. Mahler agreed, and thus two musicians celebrated the memory of a great man in the realm of music in "a modest and simple, but certainly most dignified manner." It was, considering the circumstances, certainly a peculiar way of celebrating that memory. This was six weeks before the Hamburg Senate sent the invitation to the memorial service in the Michaeliskirche.

We need not present any circumstantial evidence for the ambivalent attitude which the young conductor and composer felt toward his admired master and patron. In spite of all restraint and self-control, there are some traces of the bitterness and disappointment he experienced in his description of that scene with Bülow in his letter to Dr. Löhr and in the tale he told Förster. The competition

[1] Quoted from Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler* (9th ed.; Berlin, 1913), p. 204.

with the admired conductor is obvious in passages like the following to his friend Löhr, a few months before Bülow's resignation:[2] "If I had not so many worries—with a somewhat quieter head I would enter the competition with Bülow." The occasion for this sentence was when Bülow sent a message to Mahler asking him to conduct the next concert in his place. "This time it will really happen . . . and I have to study industriously to know the scores by heart," Mahler adds in his letter. In this passage the disappointment is turned back to the previous occasion when Bülow had asked Mahler to conduct for him and suddenly became healthy again at the last moment before the performance.

It cannot be proven, but can be made very plausible, that the ambivalent thoughts and impulses here characterized were sometimes near the threshold, if they did not reach the stage of conscious thinking itself. Here are a few passages from letters concerning the ill master: "Bülow is now again in Hamburg. The poor man feels very low. A kidney illness has now been added to his complaints" (letter to Mahler's sister, Justine. December 9, 1893). Some time later Mahler reports that Bülow goes to Cairo. "Poor man! . . . It is sad that he must have such an end and die under the melodramatic accompaniment of those old women, when one thinks that he had lived with Liszt and Wagner!" After Bülow's death Mahler becomes more and more impatient: "I have, with the funeral service and cremation of Bülow, more than enough to do" (March 28, 1894). On the day of the cremation he writes: "At last the great day has come. We shall celebrate it from nine in the morning till around five o'clock. . . . My whole hope is that the mourning ladies will not now establish a Bülow Museum (and perhaps exhibit the chamberpots and laundry slips). How people carry on about a dead Bülow—while they let the young and living ones toil and suffer!" Mahler's impatience with the exaggerated piety—he used to quote Christ's words, "Let the dead bury their dead!"—reaches its climax in this passage, written on the morning on which he heard that resurrection chorale in church. It is very significant that the expression of his aversion to the cult of the dead Bülow is immediately followed and in his thought connected with his own destiny and its hardships. The contrast is

[2] Alma Mahler dates this letter in September, 1895, which is impossible because Bülow died in February, 1894. The most likely date is December, 1892.

also psychologically very telling: the distaste for the honors given to the dead maestro, a feeling very akin to envy reveals itself.

But now the scene in the church itself. Mahler's friend at the time, J. B. Förster, also attended the service and described the deep impression which the singing of the boys' choir, accompanied by organ, made upon the audience.[8] Förster kept the program of the funeral service and quotes the text Mahler heard then. First the boys sang the Bach chorale:

> When I once will depart,
> Don't go away from me. . . .
> When I will suffer death,
> Please give support to me.

and then the Klopstock verses *Auferstehn*. The words of the Bach song must have awakened thoughts of death and death fear in each person present at the service. A reflection of that profound fear of death and of the guilt feeling out of which it grows is clearly to be felt in the tone picture of the resurrected, called by the great summons on the Last Judgment Day in Mahler's symphony. Then follows the scene of the alleviation of all anxiety by that message *Auferstehn*.

Very significant, and part of the psychological evidence I am trying to present, is the manner in which Mahler used the Klopstock poem. A comparison of the original verses and the choir of the "resurrection" movement shows that Mahler has taken only the first stanzas of the poem, has changed them in some parts and has written the continuation himself. This is also important because it seems that Mahler felt that his own verses, rather than the initial stanzas, contained the quintessence of the message his finale should convey. It speaks for the confession that Mahler made in his letter to Arthur Seidl that he looked through all the world's literature "and was finally forced to express my feelings and thoughts in my own words." Certainly some of the changes in Klopstock's verses have musical and phonetic reasons. But it is clear that Mahler cut and changed what he did not consider appropriate for himself, and these changes, omissions and additions are of some interest in the context here presented. In the first two stanzas of Klopstock that he used for the

[8] Josef B. Förster, "Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler," *Musikblätter des Anbruchs* (April, 1920).

resurrection movement, he omitted the ejaculation "Hallelujah," perhaps because he felt it was too liturgical. Similar reasons are perhaps responsible for other small changes in the wording of the Klopstock poem. (In the original hymn "the Lord who created thee," in Mahler's version "calls thee"; in the original "I have been shown," with Mahler "Thou hast been shown.") In the following verses written by Mahler the change of the essential content of the message becomes clear. The contralto solo sings:

> Believe me, my heart, believe me,
> Thou hast no loss, but gain
> Thine is all thy desire . . .

It is no longer "my dust," but "my heart," which is addressed. The message of a physical resurrection still lingers on, but in place of it, by-and-by, another kind of resurrection emerges, no longer the survival in the hereafter, but the certainty that this heart had not lived and suffered in vain. The fear of death is still felt, but only to be mastered soon:

> O death, that all things blightest,
> I never shall dread thee.

The next verses are—significantly enough—no longer directed to a "thou." The first person singular steps into its place. They have a more personal character. The composer speaks in his own name and he speaks of himself:

> My wings that I have won, unfolding,
> My fervent love outpouring,
> I shall be soaring,
> The light no eye has seen, beholding.

The theological message, the eschatology, has receded. In its place appears the expectation that the work will live forever. No longer is the mortal part which will be resurrected addressed, but "my heart." The immortality to be expected is not for the physical person, but for the achievement. The message of the Biblical resurrection is

replaced by that of the resurrection of the composer's work in those verses which Mahler has written himself.[4]

It is psychologically very interesting that this emotional development during the composition, which resulted in a change of the character of the message the finale wishes to convey, is indicated in a technical detail. Such a transference is analogous to the effect of the displacement to a peripheral point, so often observed in the symptomatology of compulsive neurotics. Here an essential and emotionally significant trait does not appear in its appropriate place, but is shifted to a seemingly unimportant detail. In a letter to Julius Buth[5] many years later (March 25, 1903), Mahler described an experience he had had in the performance of the finale of the symphony, a technical detail such as every conductor has observed: "So far I have noticed it is impossible to avoid a disconcerting commotion when the singers of the chorus rise, as is customary, at the moment of their entrance. . . . I recommend that the chorus (which has been seated up to that moment) should continue to remain seated and should only be allowed to rise at the E Flat passage, 'With wings I have won for myself' (basses). This has always been surprisingly effective. . . . I advise holding a separate rehearsal for this passage. I consider it the most difficult of the whole symphony." It is not only the most difficult, it is also the most significant passage of the work in which the young composer confesses his consuming ambition and vainglory, the conquest of his doubts and the overcoming of all fear in himself and all opposition in others, his final conviction that his work will live forever.

TWO

At this point this writer is motivated by different and opposite incentives which pull him in this or that direction for the continuation

[4] This re-interpretation becomes obvious not only in Mahler's own lines, but also in the fact that he omitted the stanzas of Klopstock's hymn which could be understood only in the sense of physical resurrection and replaced them by his own poem which shows a different concept. The verses of Klopstock are:

Day of thanks! Day of tears of joy
O Thou, my God's day!
When I have slept enough in my grave
Thou will awaken me!

[5] Mahler, *Briefe*, p. 316.

of this psychoanalytic investigation. He tells himself it is really time to return to his original subject, namely, to discover why he was haunted by that resurrection chorale. On the other hand, there is that material, equally interesting to the psychoanalyst as a contribution to the intimate biography of a composer and to the inner dynamics of creative activity. It has been shown that the inhibition in Mahler's production was conquered when he heard that Klopstock hymn at the memorial service for Bülow, and that this occasion reawakened old feelings of rage and bitterness against the admired and hated opponent of his compositions. Furthermore, our analysis made it very likely that the unconscious satisfaction over the power of his wishes, which had killed the antagonist, was displaced to the coincidental singing of that chorus providing Mahler with the long searched-for finale of his symphony. It was not this unconscious satisfaction over the fall and death of an old patron and enemy which returned from the area of the repressed, but the conviction that the symphony which occupied him would live forever. With this breakthrough of heightened self-confidence, with the elation about the mysterious fact that the very funeral service of the critic provided the missing text, the destiny of the work was decided in its composer's mind.

This writer was still not satisfied with the analytic solution of this case of an obsessional phenomenon and decided to follow the analytic search at least some steps farther. The material at his disposal, collected for so many years, is abundant, and he has only to choose from its overflow.

In the beginning of that letter in which Mahler describes his experience at the memorial service, he makes a few remarks about the symphony. He says that he always comes to the point where he must make the "word" the bearer of the idea at last. "That is what must have happened to Beethoven in his Ninth—only that era could not furnish him with appropriate material. For, basically, Schiller's poem is not fitted for the expression of the unheard-of conception which was in Beethoven's mind." Now Mahler tells of his search for a text for his final movement and introduces the tale of the experience at the funeral celebration with the sentence: "At that time I had long planned to introduce the chorus into the last movement, and only hesitated in fear that this might be interpreted as a superficial imitation of Beethoven." We know now from letters and other

sources that the decision to introduce a chorus into the final movement was followed by a long paralysis of Mahler's productivity.[6] The summer of 1893, during which he was concentrating on this last movement, remained artistically sterile. He could not bring the movement to its end and had to return to Hamburg when the theater season started, with empty hands. A few months later the funeral service for Bülow brought him the desired solution.

It is very likely that the tension of that summer had all the clinical symptoms of an anxiety state. This emotion was, of course, conditioned by the fact that the finale of the symphony could not be found. Is there any possibility of probing deeper into the unconscious reasons and motives of that anxiety? Yes, a memory trace of this time remained alive in Mahler, and its character gives itself away in the passage of that letter just mentioned and written four years later, in the "fear" that the introduction of a chorus might be interpreted as an imitation of Beethoven. Is there not a concealed fear that the public might think that the young composer was trying to compete with Beethoven? And is there not behind that fear the rejection of an unconscious ambitious tendency to reach the greatness of Beethoven and of his Ninth Symphony? We cannot assume that Mahler consciously and clearly ever thought of such a possibility, but wishes do not know any reverence, do not consider distances in artistic gifts and do not shrink from attempting the impossible. That fear is, of course, a projection of a possibility in Mahler's own unconscious thought that the finale of his symphony would compete with the shadow of the giant—a wish which would appear to every composer as an offense against the sovereign, as a musical lese majesty. The violent rejection of such an outrageous ambition expressed itself in the impossibility of finding an appropriate text for the projected chorale and contributed to the anxiety and the doubt that the composer felt in that summer of 1893 in which his creativity was blocked.

The comparison with Beethoven already appears in the statement that he, too, always arrived at a point where the word must become the bearer of a musical idea ("That is what must have happened to Beethoven in his Ninth"). But there follows immediately the remark that Beethoven's era could not furnish him with appropriate

[6] Compare Alfred Rose, "Aus Mahlers Sturm- und Drangperiode," *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (Oct. 15, 1928).

material and the criticism that Schiller's "Ode to Joy" is not fitted for the expression of Beethoven's conception. Does it not seem as if the competition with the greatest symphonist is here displaced from the question of the introduction of a chorale in general to the problem of an appropriate text? Does not the unconscious of the reader who notices the emotional undertones of this passage also feel the temerity of comparing oneself as a composer with Beethoven? Mahler tries to compete with the superior predecessor in the displacement to the text. It appears that the unconscious competitive tendencies have found a new field of battle, a side scene for the symphonic contest in which Mahler is no match for a Beethoven.

We psychoanalysts frequently observe that the interference of unconscious tendencies with reasonable trains of thought betrays itself by the emergence of false logical arguments, of unsound or untenable statements. How about the logic of Mahler's assertion that Beethoven's era could not furnish him with appropriate material for the text of a final choir, and that Schiller's poem is not fitted for it? Did Mahler's era furnish more appropriate material, did he choose his chorale from a contemporary poet? The answer to the first question is, of course, that Beethoven chose Schiller's poem because it appeared to him as the best expression of his concept, and he had a vast amount of material from which he could select in the classical poems of his time, including those of Klopstock, whose odes he, of course, knew, and who had died more than twenty years before Beethoven conceived his Ninth Symphony. And yet Mahler did not choose any of the poems of his contemporaries, but just that ode "Resurrection" by good old Klopstock, written more than seventy years before. When Beethoven's era could not furnish the great composer with an appropriate text for his final choir, Mahler was "struck as if by a bolt of lightning" by a poem of this very era!

If the unconscious or rather the repressed ambitious wish to compete with Beethoven and his Ninth Symphony was felt by Mahler during the composition of his Second Symphony, traces of the repressed must be discoverable, because, as Freud once said, it is not given to mortals fully to conceal their secret. If this psychoanalytic reconstruction is correct, it should be possible to prove it by way of psychological circumstantial evidence. Let us first look at the text, especially at the lines Mahler himself wrote and added. They express

clearly and unambiguously just that ambition and the expectation that the composer's work will live forever:

> My wings that I have won, unfolding,
> I shall be soaring,

and then proclaims:

> I shall die to live forever . . .

Mahler speaks and sings of his immortality in those lines. The doubt that his gifts are great enough to enter in competition with the composer of the Ninth Symphony is at this point overcome. He is sure he will be immortal like Beethoven.

To produce added psychological evidence: Mahler was convinced that, of the symphonies of Beethoven, only the First, Second and Fourth could be performed by the orchestras and conductors of his time, "all others are made impossible by them and are lost under their hands. Only Richard Wagner . . . could perform them, and today I."[7] This emphasis on his congeniality with Beethoven—congeniality in the original sense according to the Latin—*genius* and together—speaks a strong language. It is also clearly audible in some statements he made to a friend about Beethoven's C Minor Symphony: "The words they have put into Beethoven's mouth about that first movement 'Thus Destiny knocks on the door' do not exhaust its colossal content for me at all. He could rather have said of it: 'This am I.'"[8] Putting some minor circumstantial evidence into the footnote, I would like to refer to an interesting experience of

[7] In the first movement of the symphony, the clarinets have a theme reminiscent of a passage of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Specht, *Gustav Mahler*, p. 20). Paul Bekker in *Gustav Mahler's Sinfonien* (Berlin, 1921), p. 72, points to the great final climax which has to be conceived as influenced by Beethoven's model "in spite of Mahler's disavowal." Mahler also made some instrumental changes in the instrumentation of the Ninth Symphony. (He did the same with other works by Beethoven, for instance with the Streichquartett in F Minor, Opus 95, which he ordered to be played by the whole orchestra.) Many critics in Hamburg and Vienna accused him of sacrilege. Mahler considered it necessary to publish a printed declaration in which he defended his version of Beethoven's symphony referring to the composer's deafness and to shortcomings of the wind instruments of his time. For the text of Mahler's declaration and the history of the press campaign which followed compare Ludwig, Karpath, *Begegnung mit dem Genius* (Wien, 1934), p. 133 ff.

[8] Quoted from Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler*, pp. 53, 130 ff.

Mahler's which proves that his ambition and the fear connected with it found a compromise expression in a neurotic symptom. His friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner tells the story.[9] Mahler had to study Beethoven's Ninth Symphony which he had to conduct just at the time when he had his hands full with rehearsals of the first three movements of his Second Symphony in the winter of 1896. To supervise the enlarged orchestra for the Ninth Symphony, Mahler ordered a carpenter to build an especially high podium and conductor's desk for himself. He saw it first on the evening of the performance when it loomed before him like a scaffold, a full story high. When he ascended the stairs, such a dizziness came over him that he thought he would immediately fall down headlong. He gathered all his energy and strength and remained in his place without moving the lower part of his body, as if rooted there, while he conducted the Ninth Symphony.

The dizziness at ascending the stairs of that high conductor's desk is certainly to be understood as a psychosomatic expression of the fear of punishment for a thought or impulse. But the nature of his thought is obvious because Mahler himself had done something unusual in ordering that lofty podium where he would stand as the conductor. He must have unconsciously manifested by it that he was superior to all other conductors at the performance of the Ninth Symphony.[10] This dizziness in ascending the stairs to his

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] It is interesting to compare the report of Bauer-Lechner about Mahler's towering conductor's desk with a dream whose clarity of symbolic expression left nothing to be desired: A lady acquainted with Freud reports the dream (*Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 336) which Freud could partially interpret without analysis because he knew something of the personal relationships of the dreamer: She is at a Wagner performance at the opera. There is in the middle of the stalls a high podium, enclosed by a tower which has iron bars. Up there is the conductor. He runs about behind his bars, perspires terribly and conducts from this position, the orchestra sitting around the base of the tower. The tower in the stalls is to be literally understood: the man who in her opinion should be in the place of the present conductor towers over all members of the orchestra. The dream is a visual act and can express that metaphor only in translating it into a plastic presentation. The name of the man in the dream is Hugo Wolf, the famous composer of beautiful songs and of the opera *Corregidor*. It is of some interest that Hugo Wolf, who became insane, was for some years a friend of Gustav Mahler and offered him the score of his opera when Mahler became director of the Vienna Opera. When Wolf became manifestly psychotic, he imagined that he was director of the Vienna Opera, appeared in Mahler's apartment and declared that he was the composer, spoke to singers of the Opera whom he dismissed, etc. . . . The iron bars in that dream present, of course, Wolf in the asylum and at the same time allude to him as a wild animal (name!).

towering desk expressed the subterranean fear of punishment for such conceit. If in the installation of that lofty desk his conviction of superiority was unconsciously expressed, the dizziness as a neurotic symptom reveals his doubt and the fear of punishment.

At the same time Mahler was rehearsing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, he studied the first three movements of his Second Symphony with the orchestra in Berlin. At exactly the hour when he would hear his work and make others hear it the first time, he had one of his terrible migraine attacks which did not release him for a moment during the whole performance. He scarcely dared to move, and conducted with an unprecedented quietness, which aroused the astonishment of all who knew his nervous and vivid manner of conducting. He was scarcely able to bow to the public later on and sank as if dead on a couch at home. Half an hour later the attack had passed. Instead of entering into a discussion of migraine as a vasomotor-neurotic symptom, we want to point to the two instances here given as evidence of Mahler's extraordinary energy and self-mastery. As conductor and composer, he was not only willing, but ready and sometimes even eager, to bear abuse and ridicule. Yet he remained certain that his symphonies would live and be appreciated by later generations. He maintained his place literally, as can be seen in the two cases here sketched, as well as metaphorically. Our glance follows the life of this man from childhood to maturity. When as a boy he was asked what he wanted to become, he answered, "A martyr." And he became in reality a martyr, though sometimes in a belligerent and provocative manner. But he had also the tenacity and defiance, the power and energy of the martyr. When a high official warned him that, as a director of the Vienna Opera, he should not be so ruthless in the pursuit of his ambitions and should not beat his head against a stone wall, Mahler answered, "I do beat my head against the wall, but it's the wall that gets a dent in it."

We cannot know what the verdict of the future will be about the Second Symphony with which Mahler entered into a contest with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. We dare to predict that later generations will share our opinion that this very work that has been most appreciated by audiences was perhaps the weakest of Mahler's symphonies. But we trust that posterity will not hesitate to consider Mahler as one of the very few symphonists who was worthy to follow the shadow of the giant.

THREE

The situation in which the composer received the inspiration for the finale of his symphony seemed to us as an event of an accidental kind, which the listener did not consider as fortuitous but as mysterious. More than this, which he felt as miraculous. The question in the mind of an unbiased investigator will, of course, be: Why did a coincidence obtain the character of a token or sign of a miracle in the thoughts of Mahler? We tried to find a psychological explanation for this concept in Mahler's unconscious belief in the power of his thoughts. It seems that the supernatural powers wait until the person to whom they send their message is in an appropriate emotional state to receive it. They, those higher powers, are apparently also partial in regard to the person of the receiver. On a certain occasion, Anatole France expressed his regret in this respect. "I love the occult," he said, "but the occult does not requite my love; it does not appear in my presence." Even the occasion for the emergence of the mysterious message seemed to be carefully chosen. It was at the memorial service for the admired and hated master that Mahler received the inspiration. It is doubtful if it would have made the same impression if Mahler had heard that chorale sung on some casual occasion.

The psychologist's task is not to explain the coincidence that an appropriate text for the finale was sung at that service, but just the concept of a mysterious event, the impression the coincidence made upon the composer. It is conspicuous that Mahler does not even mention another mysterious event—so to speak, a second, "minor" miracle —in that letter he wrote about the scene of inspiration. There was, however, such a remarkable coincidence, and it must have affected Mahler and really astonished him. Perhaps he did not mention it because it did not contribute to the composition of the symphony. It seemed to be just a case of telepathy.

In that letter to Seidl, Mahler says: "And yet, if I had not carried that idea with me, how could I have experienced it? There were a thousand people with me in the church at that moment." He wonders why the chorale struck him "like a bolt of lightning," became his "Holy Annunciation," and nobody else shared the experience.

There was, however, at least one person among the thousand who

then sat in the church, who experienced something akin, if not the same, although much less powerful. In other words, one other person had the idea at this moment: Here is the chorale for which Mahler has searched so long as a finale of his symphony. This person was J. B. Förster to whom Mahler had played parts of his symphony, with whom he had discussed the problem of the symphonic finale and to whom Mahler had recounted how Bülow had reacted when the young composer had played the *Totenfeier* to him. Förster described how he became acquainted with Mahler in Hamburg and how they became friends. Born and bred in Bohemia like Mahler, a musician and composer like Mahler, Förster also knew and admired Bülow, about whose personality and musicianship he wrote an interesting report in his memoirs.[11] He had met Bülow in Prague many years before and had now renewed his acquaintanceship here in Hamburg, where he was music critic on a newspaper. We have already heard that he had asked Mahler to play for him once more that first funeral movement when the news of Bülow's death arrived. It was, so to speak, a private memorial of the two musicians in honor of the departed conductor, six weeks before the official service at the church. Förster also attended this celebration and described how the boys' choir sang "with angels' tongues" and how the listeners were deeply touched. "It sounded," he reports, "like the annunciation of a holy hope, had the solemnity of a prayer, the power of a miracle and the charm of a fairy tale. It sounded and all hearts sang with it:

Rise, yes, rise wilt thou, my dust . . .

I had not spoken with Mahler at the funeral service. But in the afternoon something drove me to call on him. And when I opened the door of his simple studio, he sat at his table, turned around and said, 'Förster, I have it!' And I said, 'Rise, yes, rise . . .' Then he looked at me, astonished and confused, because I had guessed his most secret thought."

There are quite a few interesting points in this report. In the first place, of course, the phenomenon itself and its explanation. Is it a case of telepathy? It is very unlikely that Förster, too, received a message from the beyond, from the deceased. There are cases of such multiple communication in the protocols of spiritualistic seances,

11 Compare his articles "Gustav Mahler in Hamburg" in *Prager Presse*, 1926.

but it appears conspicuous that the message would be addressed to the musicians who knew the symphony and Bülow's opinion of it, and who were acutely aware of how difficult it would be to find an adequate text for the finale of the symphony. We put aside for the moment the likelihood that the dead Bülow got in touch with his two admirers and suggested to them in a mysterious manner an appropriate finale for a symphony whose first movement he had detested while he was alive. There still remains the possibility that Mahler's idea was communicated to Förster in some telepathic fashion. But is it necessary to call on telepathy in this particular case? Is a psychological explanation not sufficient?

Förster made the acquaintance of Mahler soon after his arrival in Hamburg. Förster was at first shy toward the conductor but Mahler's "compelling amicability" soon charmed him. His admiration for Mahler's achievements at the Hamburg Opera increased. The two musicians studied Bach's cantatas together. Mahler occasionally touched on more intimate items in conversation, told Förster many things about his family and showed him "the old chair with the torn linen slipcover which his father had used," spoke of his brother Otto and his sister Justine. Förster was, so to speak, introduced to Mahler's family. Förster reports: "His high intelligence, the independence of his judgment, founded on intense study of works of art, his enthusiasm and warmth were irresistible in their effect." When Mahler played the *Totenfeier* to his friend, Förster admired him as a composer and shook his hand. Mahler looked at him full of gratitude, and the two musicians discussed the themes and instrumental effect of the composition. Förster introduced this report with a sentence which in this context has a strange character.[12] He remembered that Mahler justifiably hoped that the composition would have a deep-going effect and continued: "Thus came the hour of the Paolo Veronese dawn in which all things appear transparent and transfigured for some minutes as if they were animated and ready to give away their secret. Then Mahler started to tell his story. 'Do you know Bülow?' " Mahler then told him the story of the scene in which Bülow expressed his distaste for the *Totenfeier*. Should Förster have sensed the unconscious emotions which Mahler expressed? The secret cannot be in the facts the composer told his

12 "Erinnerungen an Gustav Mahler," *Denkblätter des Anbruch* (April, 1920), p. 293.

listener, but in his emotional attitude toward Bülow's abuse, in the reactions which Bülow's violent dislike of his music awakened in him. Those emotions were expressed in his intonation or gestures when telling the tale because there is only a single word in the story itself which reveals an emotion, the word "nevertheless." ("We separated quite amicably, nevertheless.")

Förster, about the same age as Mahler, of a similar background, a composer who daydreamed of performances of his own work, must have unconsciously identified himself with Mahler. He, too, had an ambivalent attitude toward Bülow whom he admired and disliked. He, too, had unconscious revolutionary tendencies against the conservative older conductor whom he had to respect. With the rejection of Mahler's *Totenfeier* as a representative composition of the young generation, the master had by implication also condemned Förster's works. The indignation that trembled in Mahler's report, and betrayed itself even in its controlled form, was not only communicated to Förster, but communicated itself to him. Here were the most favorable conditions for identification of a person with another present, because the same unconscious tendencies united the two men. After Mahler's tale this understanding became clear enough. Förster reports that Mahler was very grateful for his admiration of the *Totenfeier:* "I appeared to him in that moment as a representative and spokesman of the young generation and he learned from me that this generation will understand him and walk with him." The contrast and opposition to the older generation, represented by Bülow about whom the two musicians had just spoken, was certainly felt by both. The unconscious identification of Förster with Mahler was intensified in the following months in which the finale of the symphony which Förster almost considered his own work was discussed.

Förster's request that Mahler should play the *Totenfeier* to him again when the news of Bülow's death appeared is, under these circumstances, rather strange and can only be explained by the assumption that unconscious tendencies were responsible for it. The celebration of the memory of this "great man in the realm of music" consists in the playing of a work he had most violently condemned. True, the composition contained the theme of mourning for the death of a hero, but Bülow had declared that this was no music at all. We could well understand it if the two friends and musicians

wanted to honor their admired master by playing the funeral movement of the *Eroica* (which was conducted a few days later on by Mahler at the concert in Bülow's memory), but why this composition to honor the departed critic who had been horrified at it?

The playing of this composition thus consciously expressed the grief over Bülow's death, but at the same time unconscious defiance and rebellion against him, reverence and contempt. It conferred honor and inflicted defamation on his memory. This playing was simultaneously glorification and disgrace. Not only was the departed celebrated but his departure as well. Consciously the playing expressed mourning; unconsciously, triumph. The repressed mockery crept surreptitiously into this celebration whose hidden character was that of an effrontery, an offensive honoring. In the same action which was to render homage to his memory, the defiance came to a telling or singing and resounding manifestation. We find such an alloy of emotions of conscious respect and reverence with repressed defiance and mockery often enough in the compromise expression of obsessional symptoms. The playing of that *Totenfeier* was certainly also an expression of guilt feeling toward the master, against whom both musicians had frequently felt rebellious. It is characteristic for such a celebration, as it is for the religious sacrifice, that, as Freud says, it offers reparation for a disgrace inflicted in the same action which the memory of that crime continues.[18] Yes, I daresay the dignified private memory celebration of the two composers for the loved master is an especially beautiful instance of such an occasion of ambivalent character.

Förster's request to hear Mahler play that funeral movement again, this time in memory of Bülow, was consciously an expression of his grief, but unconsciously it amounted almost to a congratulation to Mahler. In listening to the composition, the two friends share their profound mourning, but they find each other also in an unconscious common gratification of triumph hidden behind that grief. Such unconscious communication was founded on a similar ambivalent attitude toward the living Bülow and a similar emotional reaction to the message of his death.

The mental process that took place in Förster during the funeral service in church is easy to understand. Listening to that choir, he must have felt emotions similar to Mahler's (with whom he had so

18 "Totem and Tabu." *Gesammelte Schriften*, X, 180.

vividly identified). Guilt feeling on account of evil wishes against Bülow was also awakened in him. Anxiety for himself, the dread of his own death and then the conquest of all fear. Förster reports: "I, too, read the text and had at the same moment the feeling which took possession of Mahler: Here is the finale of the Second Symphony." Those emotions, aroused during the service, must have led to thoughts of Mahler and his symphony. Like Mahler, his friend must have unconsciously dismissed those fears as superfluous and arrived at a conviction that there was no danger and he would succeed, as would his friend, in spite of Bülow's opposition. The unconscious identification had led to a surprising simultaneity of the symphonic solution under the impression of the chorale. The similarity of the underlying unconscious attitude resulted in a similar emotional effect.

Förster's report appears, as it were, as a duplicate of Mahler's description, as a deluded and weaker reflection. In an indirect way, it confirms the correctness of the analytic result at which we arrived in Mahler's case. Förster's experience mirrors the attitude of his friend, makes some of its features even clearer. At all events, it reduces the singleness and uniqueness of the process and makes the impression of the miraculous vanish. Förster must have unconsciously felt what Mahler had experienced. The emotions of his friend were induced in him and led him to similar reactions on account of his unconscious identification with Mahler. Here is not a case of telepathy, but a phenomenon of collective psychology, of the reaction of a mass *en deux*, not mysterious, but remarkable and worthy of psychological investigation.

CHAPTER XXI

TheSolution

ONE

THE PROBLEM of the induction of unconscious emotions of another person offers me a welcome transition for the return to my original theme. The point of departure, so far remote from the point I arrived at here, was indeed a trifling question: Why did the tune of the resurrection chorale haunt me in those days from December 25 until New Year's, 1925? Why did it pervade everything I thought and not release me during that week in which I considered what I would say in my speech at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society?

The reader of the preceding chapter will be as much surprised as I was when I discovered what a wide detour I had made to return to this little psychological puzzle, because I had almost forgotten from where I had come, absorbed in my interest in that intriguing problem of Mahler's conception of the Second Symphony. Compared with the restricted prospect of my small problem, that psychological investigation had seemed to open wide horizons, and promised some still new insight, not only into the emotional and mental life of a great composer, but also into the secrets of artistic creation. From the plain ground of the personal question that had aroused my curiosity first, the way had led upwards to general problems. This ascent followed the way of a huge arc that crosses a river in great height to descend on the opposite bank. It is an uneasy feeling walking down from a peak that opens such a wide lookout to the valley.

The insight into the unconscious processes of J. B. Förster gives me heart to undertake a fragmentary self-analysis. That last piece of the huge arc with which I compared the course of this psychological exploration no longer concerned the personality of the composer. The far-reaching concord between Mahler and Förster cannot make us overlook that there were differences between them, both in character and in their situations. Mahler is the creative and original personality, in the leading position, Förster, the sympathetic listener and admirer, ready to identify himself with the composer whose three symphonic movements had made a deep impression upon him. The communication that goes on between their emotions is best compared to that between the writer and the reader or the composer and his audience. The composer expressed his experiences in his work, and the listener identified with him, absorbing these experiences as if they were his own, which in psychical reality they were, although in material reality they were different. The identification was made possible through the identity of unconscious emotions more than through the similarities of conscious tendencies. The composer did not awaken those emotions. He only reawakened what had been dormant and what had waited for its resurrection. But here I am led back again by my own associations to that haunting melody.

Is it not odd that we know only a very small part of what we think and feel, that we often have not the slightest inkling of what goes on in ourselves? That state of inner affairs can best be evaluated in all its strangeness when we compare it with something extraordinary that happens before our eyes in the external world without our taking any notice of it, without any trace of perception or recognition. The laymen who are interested in psychoanalysis—and even many psychoanalysts—speak of a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious as responsible for neuroses and many other psychopathologic phenomena. But there is hardly any conflict between the conscious and the unconscious of a person. The conflict exists and is maintained between the organized self and an unknown and unrecognized part of this self that is an outsider and outlaw of the psychic household: the repressed.

To return to my comparison: the unconscious resembles a tenant who has rented the basement of a house, keeps mostly to himself and is very rarely noticed by the landlord. That unknown part of our thoughts we call the repressed is to be compared to a man who,

unknown to the landlord, lives illegitimately in a remote and hidden part of the cellar. Nobody in the house is aware of his existence and of his dark doings. Such a reflection of a general psychological kind might well occur to a reader who remembers that out of a blue December sky that chorale melody rushed upon me on Christmas, 1925, and did not release me until after New Year's. In one of his letters from New York, Mahler wrote to Bruno Walter:[1] "What is it that thinks in us? And what acts in us?" In the situation then, during the Christmas vacation on the Semmering, I could have asked, "What is it that sings in us?" Something in me, that unknown part of the self, brought the chorale melody from some deep-sea level up to the conscious level. I had not the slightest notion how and why.

The reader will remember that at first I paid no attention to the unexpected guest in my thoughts and that I then tried in vain to evict the intruder who broke in again and again. He will remember that after I had once decided to occupy myself with the problem, I approached it from a general point of view, namely, from the question of the haunting melody and had in mind writing an objective study on this subject without mentioning my personal experience. I had hoped that the puzzle of that special chorale that had haunted me would find its explanation when I once understood the general phenomenon and its psychological causes. I had failed in my attempt as before. I had failed in finding a satisfactory explanation by self-analysis during which my thoughts seemed to go off on a tangent. After these two failures I began to study the Second Symphony itself, its program notes and its history in books and articles. I must have hoped that the psychological information I was searching for would fall into my lap as soon as I knew more about the composition itself. But that information was slow in arriving, and only after I plunged into the source of biographical material about Mahler did it dawn on me why the tune had haunted me in that week before New Year's.

I had heard the Second Symphony several times before that experience, but I knew very little about its emotional genesis and development. As a matter of fact, I knew only one significant fact about the chorale in the last movement. I had read in Paul Stefan's book on Gustav Mahler, which appeared while the composer was

[1] Without date, perhaps in the beginning of 1909. Mahler, *Briefe*, p. 415.

still alive,[2] that Mahler had been inspired to compose the chorale *Aufersteh'n* when he heard it sung at the funeral service for Bülow. Stefan adds: "It was as if the spirit of the departed had saluted his friend once again." This was the only detail known to me at the time, but this scarcity of data is immaterial for the psychological reconstruction which will follow.[3] The full knowledge of details of the relationship between Bülow and Mahler and of the specific circumstances of the work on the symphony which I acquired in studying the biographical material later on will, however, be useful in the comparison of the unconscious emotional processes.

TWO

The following reconstruction of the psychological premises and motivations of the emergence of the melody must start from the telephone conversation during which I was informed of Abraham's death and of Freud's request that I give the speech in my teacher's memory at the meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. A few hours later I took my walk along the road bordered by pine trees, that walk on which the chorale tune suddenly occurred to me. While walking I considered what I would say in my speech. Memories of Abraham, of his way of speaking, walking, and so on, emerged, of his great kindness and helpfulness toward me. Among these memories—here begins the reconstruction—must have occurred one of a conversation Abraham and I had had on Mahler some years before. I had spoken enthusiastically of the Second Symphony, but Abraham remained reserved, and I felt that he did not like the composer I loved. On another occasion Abraham spoke with admiration of the poems of Christian Morgenstern whose humor and philosophy I did not relish. Here was a difference not of evaluation alone, but also of temperament, that essential part of the personality. If my memory is correct, I was somewhat upset (although I was, of course, concealing it) when I recognized that I could not evoke in my friend the warmth and interest I felt in Mahler's music.

While I walked on and up that road, another dissonance prior to

[2] München, 1910.

[3] The first edition of Paul Stefan's book with that passage is before me. The second edition (München, 1912) is not essentially changed.

this one between Abraham and me must have occurred to me: it had become clear to me in our conversations that Abraham did not favor my plan to practice psychoanalysis or to apply psychoanalytic therapy, like so many psychiatrists then and since (as do now most members of the New York Psychoanalytic Society). He was of the opinion that only physicians should treat neurotic patients psychoanalytically, while Freud and other analysts thought that especially gifted and trained psychologists could also apply the psychoanalytic method in treating patients under the supervision of a physician. Here was another difference of opinion between Abraham and myself, and this one of a more vital kind, since my whole future depended on the decision I had then to make. I made up my mind to enter analytic practice after my training analysis with Abraham was finished in spite of his opinion, and later on he had never objected to my professional activity. My impression is he had a general prejudice against what is called lay analysis and that the arguments he brought out in that conversation with me were not of a personal nature, in other words, he did not doubt my analytic talent.

At meetings of the Berlin Analytic Society and in private he frequently spoke favorably of discussion remarks or other contributions I had made. If he was thus on principle, and, of course, in my case as well, against analytic practice by non-physicians—I had not an M.D. but a Ph.D. degree—he sincerely and warmly appreciated my contributions to analytic research, especially those to literature, ethnology and comparative history of religions. He did everything in his power to encourage and promote these studies. He offered to take me into training analysis and did not charge me any fee for the sessions. I know from himself and from Freud that he thought that the books and articles I had already published or written presented a promise of valuable future analytic research work. Here, thus, is a contrast: I knew that Abraham appreciated me as psychoanalytic explorer, but not as a therapist. I was later on reminded of that difference when I read in Mahler's letters that Bülow had a high regard for him as conductor, but did not respect him as composer. Abraham's reserved temperament and mental balance prevented him from expressing his appreciation or dislike in the passionate manner of Bülow, but there was nevertheless no ambiguity about his reactions. He thought I should dedicate my work to studies applied to the science of religion and mythology, to works of litera-

ture, etc.—and had a negative attitude toward my decision to practice psychoanalysis.

It would be impossible for me at the moment to date that conversation in which our disagreement about this general and personal question became obvious and was clearly expressed, but I believe it was several years after I had finished my training analysis with Abraham and was already practicing psychoanalysis in Vienna. That was perhaps in 1919 or 1920, on one of Abraham's frequent visits in Vienna, on one of my rarer trips to Berlin or at a meeting at a Psychoanalytic Congress. I still know that the conversation was in friendly terms. Abraham brought forward many arguments against lay analysis, and I listened most of the time, but at certain points I contradicted and spoke my mind about the question, much in the manner in which Freud later on (1926) discussed it in *The Problem of Lay Analyses*.[4] We agreed to disagree, but, as Mahler said about that scene with Bülow, we separated "quite amicably," our friendship continued and my respect and admiration for Abraham continued to increase. There was a correspondence about analytic problems, and we saw each other frequently in the following years. That disagreement or difference of opinion, it was true, had not only academic significance for me, but I took it personally, as if my teacher and friend caviled at my analytic practicing, yes, as if he disputed my right to treat patients analytically, which he certainly did not. Everything in our relationship was all right on the surface, but a slight remnant of discord lingered on for a few hours after our conversation. It was soon drowned by my gratefulness and affection for the master who had given me so many wonderful signs of his friendship and kindness.

You need not stand on the brink of a precipice to look down into the pit. Through only a tiny crack you can see into an abyss. The slight disagreement about lay analysis was, it seemed now, only a symptomatic manifestation of a concealed antagonistic attitude on my part toward my benefactor. In that conversation a wave of hostile and competitive feeling must have emerged, stirred up by Abraham's objection or doubt, and must have threatened to reach the surface. If my reconstruction is correct, this impulse was quickly suppressed and submerged, but it had not evaporated. It must have lived in the underground for a long time after it had become actual for just a

[4] American translation (New York, 1927).

moment. Nothing of this kind was known to me. I scarcely remembered a slight annoyance and impatience during our conversation, but the continuation of this fleeting feeling into the realm of unconscious emotions would obviously be recognized as fury or anger expressed in a death wish against Abraham, toward whom I consciously felt only grateful and affectionate.

When the first shock of the message of his death had subsided and I began to think of the speech I would give in two weeks, my thoughts were, of course, led back to memories of the man who had been so kind to me. Somewhere at some point memories of our discussion must have crept into my train of thought and with it a memory trace of the old emotions, renewed and resurrected for a second in their original and disavowed intensity. Out of the midst of affectionate and deeply grateful feeling, out of the sincere grief, suddenly the annoyance emerged, an excellent instance for the return of the repressed from an unknown emotional vault. With those memories and emotions, another new feeling must have appeared for a split second and was immediately banned from the conscious level: satisfaction that Abraham was dead. I am very well aware of how monstrous such an admission is and how horrifying it must sound that a man, even for a moment, should feel gratified at the death of an old friend who was not only his admired teacher but who had shown extraordinary kindness toward him. But indignation is no substitute for psychological truth, and I have to state here the result to which my psychoanalytic reconstruction led, without being influenced by moral judgment. It seems that there is something fateful and inescapable in the ambivalent attitude we have toward persons we highly respect and appreciate as our teachers and older friends. The unconscious feeling of satisfaction about the death of the friend does not in itself prove my being a human monster, because such a phenomenon is frequently met with in the analysis of highly ethical patients who are shocked by the invasion of such a surprising emotion. The emergence of this feeling can be ascribed to the breakthrough of an old grudge, to an unconsciously felt rivalry, to repressed hostility or envy and to a number of other unconscious motives from the area of the ego drives. A strong moral reaction either in the form of self-reproach or, if the feeling of gratification has been unconscious, of depression or fear regularly follows such an emotion.

In my case the unconscious satisfaction must have had its unknown motives not only in the renewal of old feelings of annoyance, but also in tendencies of envy and competition with Abraham, emotions I thought I had mastered a long time before. In this context it is not immaterial that I was called upon to deliver the speech in his memory, as if I had been not only his favorite disciple, but also his substitute, in my mind perhaps his successor.

Also, in my case, symptoms of a reaction against that fleeting feeling of satisfaction can be found, although in a form hard to recognize. The reader will remember that on this walk in the evening the character of the landscape seemed suddenly changed. The fir trees seemed menacing, the scene sinister, almost frightening. There was a deep, mysterious silence around me and in me while I slowly walked on that path, previously so familiar and all of a sudden so strange, while I was thinking of the loss Abraham's death meant for the analytic movement and for us all. And then I caught myself in the middle of my mourning humming that solemn chorale: "You will rise again. . . ."

The fact that the landscape took on a sinister and almost frightening character can easily be understood through the effect of an unconscious projection. The fear of retaliation and of punishment for the wicked feeling of satisfaction was cast forth to the surroundings. Instead of consciously feeling fear that I would be punished by destiny or God, instead of becoming aware of a reaction or change in myself, I had the impression that the winter scenery had taken on another appearance. The analogy of this mood to the terror and panic of the resurrected marching to the Last Judgment in the final movement of the Second Symphony is obvious. It is as if it were the individual miniature picture of that gigantic vision, but I am almost certain that I thought of such a comparison only a long time afterwards.

The chorale must have gained entrance into my thoughts on another route, stepped into my mind, so to speak, through a side door. Before thinking of our discussion about lay analysis, I had remembered another earlier conversation in which we had disagreed. Abraham had remained cool and reserved when I spoke in "partial enthusiasm" (Goethe's expression) of Mahler's symphonies. He seemed not to be especially interested—a minor disappointment for me. This memory, which had preceded the other one about our discord concerning the problem of lay analysis, must have subterraneously lingered on and had, on some detour which I can now only guess, found an emotional substitute expression in the emergence of the chorale tune. Was it that I had urged Abraham to attend a performance of the Second Symphony at the time in Berlin? It is also possible that the connection in my thoughts was formed by the place itself. At a distance of one hour's ride from the road on which I walked is the village of Breitenstein, which also belongs to the Semmering. On a hill above Breitenstein, Mahler's cottage, which he ordered built in the last year of his life, is situated.[5] The most likely assumption is that a bridge in my thoughts between Abraham and Mahler was formed not only by the memory of our conversation about the composer many years before, but by the fact that Mahler and Abraham died at the same age.[6] The memory of the conversation was, I am sure, the primary connection, and the consideration of the age at which the two men died followed as an afterthought. As will be seen, this secondary reflection became especially significant to me in the following years.

THREE

These are the external threads running from the concentration of my thoughts of Abraham to the theme of Mahler's symphony. The inner connection was provided by my emotional reaction to the unconscious satisfaction at Abraham's death which had suddenly emerged and immediately vanished. I must then have thought of the noble man and his kindness to me—with feelings of repentance and guilt, as it were, for that other "abominable" emotion—and of his excellent work as an analyst. In my speech I thought that I would emphasize the increasing influence his clinical and theoretical papers would have on the analytic research of the future and that the scientific work of the coming generation of analysts would honor him as a pioneer in some important fields.

It was at this point, I assume, that the chorale tune "Rise, yes, rise, wilt thou . . ." emerged in my thoughts. It was, thus, the ex-

[5] A few years later I visited Mrs. Alma Maria Mahler and her second husband, Franz Werfel, at their house there.

[6] Not exactly correct. Mahler had already passed fifty, while Abraham had not yet reached fifty years when he died.

pression of my reflection that posterity will return admiringly to Abraham's successful research work—a sort of musical expression of my conviction that his work will live in science. At the same time—there is no possibility of blinking at this psychological fact—the emergence of the chorale was a continuation of my unconscious defiance and of my triumph over my dead teacher and friend. Was it not this symphony about which we had disagreed, and had I not felt a fleeting disappointment when Abraham seemed not to share my love for Mahler's music? The humming of the chorale was thus the simultaneous manifestation of an honor conferred on Abraham and of an unconscious abuse of the admired man, a compromise expression of my ambivalent attitude toward my dead friend. Was it not a concealed sign of my defiance or triumph that just this tune had occurred to me when I thought of him? Was it not as if I celebrated his memory in the same thought which continued my opposition to him? The comparison of the scene appears in which Mahler and Förster played that *Totenfeier* as a private memorial for Bülow who had rejected it.

Also, in another but related direction, the emergence of that chorale out of my thoughts about the speech I should give was an expression of my unconscious ambivalent feelings toward Abraham. The lines "Rise, yes, rise again . . ." not only concerned him, but also myself or myself through him. Yes, his very death provided, as it were, the occasion for my rise, as I was chosen by Freud to write and deliver the speech in Abraham's memory to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. My ambition, vivid for so many years, was kindled anew by Abraham's death. Unconsciously I must have thought I would take the place made vacant by his departure. More than this—an upsurge of old wishes to accomplish something extraordinary must have led to the hope that I would now—in spite of him and replacing him—make contributions to psychoanalytic research that would live forever. The years of suffering, thus I must have thought, were not in vain. All I had dreamed would be mine; my ambitions would be fulfilled, now that my teacher (and opponent) had died.

Nobody need tell me how megalomaniac the content of these sentences sounds, and that my unconscious thoughts about myself and my future have all the characteristics of delusions of grandeur. My narrow analytic talent could, of course, not be compared with that of Abraham and, had I considered reality in those hours, I would

have realized clearly that I could never hope to make contributions of the originality and penetration of his clinical papers. But his death and the message from Freud had swelled up and inflated my ego to such a degree that it floated high in the air like a child's balloon.

My inflated ego stayed high up there in the following days, although I did not know it; yes, it rose even higher before it disappeared in the ether never to be seen again. The melody of the chorale haunted me and that tune seemed to recur as if it were a message I should understand, a musical signal of what went on in me, a mysterious reminder of something I forbade myself to think in clear formulated word presentations. But do not the words of the chorale themselves speak a clear language?

> Believe, my heart, you have lost nothing.
> Everything you longed for is yours, yes, yours . . .

and:

> Immortal life will He grant who called . . .

Even the ridiculous hope of becoming immortal is expressed here. As my attempt at self-analysis shows, this train of thought never reached the threshold of consciousness. My attention, when directed to the text of the chorale, took the lines literally, or rather in the sense of the Biblical resurrection vision, and my thoughts made fun of them. It is, however, very likely that I was unconsciously aware of those megalomaniac ideas and ridiculed them even in their displacement to the concept of resurrection. That chorale tune nevertheless haunted me until the day the speech in Abraham's memory was finished.

If this reconstruction is correct, traces of those repressed thoughts, secret even to myself, must be found between the lines of my speech, because nothing in the world of thoughts and emotions vanishes without leaving a trace behind. They are to be found there on various points. There is even a hint of the conquest of the teacher by the disciple, although my words are in rejection of this drive. There is the mention of Abraham's North German restraint and sobriety. The closer the speech approaches its end, the more personal its char-

acter becomes. The self-reproach emerges as it did in reality, the regret that one had not expressed enough affection to the living (otherwise put, translated into the language of the unconscious processes, one had been hostile to him in one's thoughts). Then at the end the hope is expressed that the work of the master will live and bring credit to him in the accomplishments of his students—here the note is as personal, as self-related as possible under the circumstances. Returning for a moment to the comment of my patient's little son when he saw a funeral on the street, my preoccupation in thoughts with the Second Symphony indicates itself in the fact that just this sentence of the child occurred to me. It is certainly appropriate at this point of my speech, but was it accident that the saying came to mind? Was it accidental that there is a funeral and a march which the child witnesses, and that the first movement of the Second Symphony, to which I returned in my thoughts when I tried to escape from the haunting melody, is a funeral march with all its variations and elaborations? There is, it seems to me, not even an accident in the wording of the child's question: "But why is there music?" The little boy asks that because he thinks the dead man cannot hear it any more, and I quoted the sentence which shows how little our praise means in face of death. But I have a hunch that the words "But why is there music?" are an echo of the question that occupied my thoughts at the time I wrote the speech, namely: Why does that tune haunt me? Indeed, why is there this music?

The preceding reproduction and reconstruction would seem to provide sufficient psychological information about the incident of the haunting melody were it not that two essential points remained unexplained. The one darkness concerns my unconscious identification at the time with Mahler. The second could be elucidated if I knew why the tune worked like a spell upon me. It is obvious that at this point the general problem of why a melody haunts us emerges from the place where I deserted it because I was not up to its solution. The first uncertainty can be more easily removed than the second general question.

The entrance into that shaft was already indicated by the memory of my having once spoken to Abraham about Mahler's Second Symphony and of his lukewarm response to my enthusiastic evaluation of this work. I had unconsciously felt his reaction as a personal rejection, as if the fact that he did not share my liking or admiration meant that he did not like me—in spite of all evidence to the contrary. It seems that this conversation serves later on in my unconscious mind as a junction station on which trains of thought arrive from different directions: the feelings then awakened were intensified by our later conversation about lay analysis, perceived by me in a similar sense. As my fragmentary self-analysis shows, I must have thought that Abraham's North German temperament was not in tune with my Viennese attitude, and I attributed his coolness toward Mahler, who was an Austrian, to this difference. It will be remembered that in my self-analysis I thought for a moment that Hamburg was Abraham's birthplace, not, as I knew, Bremen. Here it can already be deduced that a kind of associative attraction, comparable to the magnetic one in physics, was exerted by the unconscious comparison of myself and Mahler and by the identification of Abraham with Bülow in my unconscious thoughts. (I then thought that Bülow, who conducted the Hamburger Abonnementkonzerte, was born in Hamburg. In reality he was born in Dresden, but the contrast in my mind was North German versus Viennese.) This mistake, due to the interference of some suppressed thought, is not the only one I made, as will be immediately seen. I must have unconsciously compared Abraham's relationship with me with the attitude Bülow had toward Mahler when both were in Hamburg.

This comparison was facilitated by some obvious similarities in the two situations (Bülow, Mahler's admired model as conductor and interpreter of great music; Abraham, my training analyst, equally appreciated as therapist and clinical researcher—Bülow, the North German; Mahler, the Viennese—Mahler and I in Germany, which meant for Austrians being in a foreign country and in an environment of different mentality). More important, of course, is the inner or emotional attitude in both cases: Bülow appreciated Mahler highly as conductor, but disliked his compositions—Abraham had a high opinion of my research work, but did not like the idea of my practicing psychoanalysis. Mahler admired and respected Bülow to whom he was very grateful, as I did Abraham, but in both cases there was a concealed resentment and competition with the older man who had a leading position. The unconscious comparison can be formulated simply in the parallelism:

Bülow-Mahler
Abraham-Reik.

In this comparison, the conversation with Abraham about Mahler provides, of course, the hidden link that made my own identification with Mahler psychologically easy.

That attempt at self-analysis previously presented reveals in the course of free associations (Goethe = Heine, Beethoven = Mahler) that I considered Mahler as a symphonic successor of Beethoven. The continuation of this idea goes in a direction which does not appear in my associations, but can easily be guessed. If I unconsciously identified myself with Mahler and if I consider him as one of the symphonists who emulate the great man, the nature of my idea of grandeur can be deduced and brought into the following formula:

Goethe-Heine
Beethoven-Mahler
Freud-Reik.

In other words, my unconscious thoughts did not shy away from comparing the relation Beethoven-Mahler with the relation of Freud to myself, which meant that I considered myself worthy to continue the work of Freud in a certain direction, as Mahler daydreamed of emulating Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with his own Second Symphony. No inkling of such megalomaniac and silly thoughts was conscious to me at the time.

Here is the second mistake I made in my unconscious thoughts comparing myself with the composer. I was called upon by Freud to write and deliver the eulogy for Abraham, as Mahler was chosen to conduct the concert to the memory of his master and friend Bülow in Hamburg. I have already mentioned that I must have exaggerated in my thoughts the importance of the fact that Freud wanted me to deliver the speech and must have unconsciously taken it as a token that I was to become Abraham's successor. I attributed a much greater significance to the fact that I was to deliver the eulogy than it had in reality. I gave it a magical meaning, as if this occasion signified the first step on the road to success and fame. While I was occupied with the speech I was writing, my unconscious thoughts accompanying my ideas about Abraham ran in the direction of this

very occasion on which I would pay homage to my dead master and friend. In thinking about the comparison between that situation and the funeral celebration at which Mahler heard the boys' choir "Rise, yes, rise," I confused two things or rather two occasions. When Bülow died, Mahler conducted the next concert dedicated to his memory on February 12, 1894, but the funeral service at which the Klopstock chorale was sung was six weeks later in the Michaelis Church, not in the concert hall, and Mahler was then only one of a numerous audience. I had read about this in Paul Stefan's book on Mahler fifteen years before and had confused the facts. In my thoughts I had mistakenly assumed that Mahler had also conducted the funeral service at which he received the inspiration for the finale of the Second Symphony. At this time I did not know more about the genesis of the symphony than I had read in Paul Stefan's book.

It is psychologically interesting that, in spite of such a smattering of biographical knowledge, I had unconsciously felt the ambivalence in Mahler's attitude toward his older and superior colleague and benefactor. In sensing it, I had identified myself with the composer and had unconsciously compared Bülow with Abraham. As in Mahler's inspiration, the emergence of the resurrection tune in me was expression of mourning and self-assertion, of grief and triumph. The occurrence and recurrence of this tune was unconsciously conceived as a sign that I would take an important place in analytic research, that I, too,—like Abraham—would become a master of analysis—beside him and in spite of him. The accidental intonation of that chorale was conceived by Mahler as a sign or omen sent by destiny that his symphony would live forever. The emergence of the chorale tune became for me a hint from some mysterious fate that my analytic work would be successful. In both cases appears the same kind of unconscious magical thinking. It cannot be accidental that such a spontaneous conviction occurred in both cases at the commemorative observance for an older, admired man, whose place had been unconsciously coveted. It cannot be accidental that the fall or departure of this man became not only the premise, but also the signal for one's own victory.

The other question of why that particular melody haunted me cannot be answered with the same degree of plausibility. It would be necessary to discuss the nature of the musical appeal the tune had for me at the time, an appeal it has since lost. I have already pointed

out that the lines accompanying the tune did not have a religious or metaphysical meaning for me, but concerned the conquest of fear and doubt and the survival of one's own accomplishments. In those concealed thoughts, and in the repressed emotions from which they emerged, the deeper motives of the occurrence of the tune are recognizable. The recurrence of the chorale until it became compulsive and haunted me signifies, of course, that the tendencies hidden in those lines demanded to be heard, to be acknowledged. My reluctant feeling against that musical intruder represents my resistance to recognizing the true nature of those ambitious, aggressive and megalomaniac thoughts. It is also conspicuous and significant that the tune at first appeared piano and humble until it sang in me in that triumphant finale version like a victory march, overrunning all obstacles, sure of its own power. It is obvious that this change is meaningful, as it does not concern the content expressed in the wording of the chorale but the emotions expressed in the new character of the melody.

It seems to me that here the analytic investigation has reached its aim, although there remain enough question marks. We look back at the everyday incident of a haunting melody—how many significant impulses and emotions were compressed and condensed in such a trifling occurrence! A single and apparently trivial incident of this kind, followed up to its origin and psychoanalytically examined, can reveal the most vital secrets of a person's inner life. The therapeutic task which the analyst has to fulfill often prevents him from such energetic and unswerving pursuit of a single phenomenon, but there are certain cases in which an isolated symptom or a trivial incident of the patient's life recurs again and again until it finds its solution in psychoanalysis. Later on it seems as if so many widely spread symptoms funnel down to the one small incident, as if all the interests of the individual had been secretly concentrated at this point, as if that one tune were the haunting melody of a life.

CHAPTER XXII

The Invisible Block

ONE

THE INNER MELODY that haunted Mahler most of his life was a passionate desire to achieve and the burning ambition to be famous. In that line "I shall die to live" of the chorale, he has expressed the conviction that his work will become immortal—in spite of his self-doubts, of his anxieties and scruples.

In those weeks that followed the conception of the final movement, Mahler was filled with the certainty that he was an instrument of a high mission, as J. Förster reports. There were, however, the same friend relates, moments in which he doubted that he was chosen. "He once asked me whether I could imagine that his Second Symphony could cease to exist without tremendous loss for art and mankind, and whether the symphony does not take us beyond Beethoven. I too, was convinced of this and I could therefore, thank Heaven, give him the necessary human support that he seemed to need." The comparison of Mahler's work with Beethoven's is in this context significant.

The expressions which the composer uses when speaking of the Second Symphony leave no doubt that he was convinced that he had created an immortal work. He reports to his friend Berliner that the fifth movement of the symphony is "grandiose" and is "a daring block of most powerful building"; the final climax is "colossal."[1]

[1] Mahler, *Briefe* (July 10, 1894), p. 134.

Half a year later he speaks of the effect the symphony had at its rehearsal in Hamburg as "indescribable," and adds: "It would sound too preposterous to express myself about the great work in a letter—but it is for me beyond any doubt that the *fundus instructus* of mankind was increased by it."

There are many sentences from letters and from transmitted conversations which prove that Mahler was convinced that he would live in the memory of future generations. Natalie Bauer-Lechner reports that he refused to make any effort to have his works performed, saying, "They will do what is necessary for themselves, now or later. Need one still be around when one becomes immortal?"[2] He has sometimes the feeling that he "will not live long enough to see his time," as he writes to Josef Reitler, but he is certain that his time will come.[3] In a conversation with Bernard Schalit on a journey in 1906, he said: "I know quite well that I shall not find recognition as a composer as long as I live. It will grow on my grave. The distance of the beyond is for a fair opinion about a phenomenon like mine a *conditio sine qua non*."[4] Are those proud words not a paraphrase of that line "I shall die to live"?

Posterity did not, however, consider the works of his greatest ambition, his Second and Eighth Symphonies, his noblest achievements. The best, the real greatness of the composer is in his last creations, in *The Song of the Earth* and in the Ninth Symphony. There he is no longer in competition with his great predecessors, with Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, but walks on his own lonely road. It is psychologically interesting that Mahler is least convincing when he speaks very loud and moves us most when he speaks low. Even in his time it took only a few months to make a journey around the world. And how many years it took even a man of genius like Mahler to come into his own!

Certainly, the superiority feelings and the high self-evaluation of the creative artist have fascinating features for the psychologist, but they are only a specialized form of a more general phenomenon. We understand that Mahler in the fever of creation felt that he had a supernatural mission, and that he transferred the magic of his powerful wishes to the belief in the magical power of his music. We understand, too, that the effects of creation upon him led to his conviction that posterity would highly appreciate his symphony. When the boys' choir intoned the chorale which unaccountably brought him the finale of his symphony, it must have appeared to him that this was not simply a coincidence, but an omen and confirmation of the immortality of his work.

[2] Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen*, p. 158.
[3] *Briefe*, p. 350.
[4] *Musikblätter des Anbruchs*, p. 306.

But what might be understandable with a genius and composer, is certainly difficult to imagine in the case of a psychologist whose aim is the search of scientific knowledge. In my case, that haunting melody expresses clearly enough that I, too, was possessed by a consuming ambition, more than this, that I was craving for fame. The secret coveting of social recognition was responsible for the daydream that I would achieve something as valuable as Freud's contribution, something that would make my name immortal.

The Latin proverb proclaiming that it is sufficient to have willed something when one strives for high aims *(In magnis valuisse satis est)*, has always seemed hypocritical to me. The paranoiac who has delusions and the neurotic in his sterile daydreams also aim very high in their imagination, but their example proves that it is not sufficient to have great aspirations. The wish is certainly an important premise of achievement, but its intensity alone would result only in wishful thinking.

It seems to me more than commonplace to assume that too high self-evaluation, megalomaniac concepts and delusions of grandeur fulfill the hidden wishes of an individual. It is more fruitful to state that they realize in imagination the inner demands a person has on himself because this concept opens a better avenue to psychological understanding. The other determining factor in the genesis of overevaluation of a person's gifts and achievements is not, as naive people would assume, simply vanity, but his secret inner perception of inadequacy, of his inability of fulfilling those demands.

There is an inner factor that measures the distance between what we demand from ourselves and what we can achieve. This secret arbiter is known to us psychoanalysts only in the area of moral summons. We call it conscience, and our experience shows us that only a part of its work and effects is conscious to the mind of the person. It is very likely that a similar observer and critic (or the same in another function) exists also in the area of individual achievements. He takes care of an extension of conscience, of a

descendant of this earlier installation within the self. Ideas of grandeur, too high self-evaluation and self-aggrandizement are voices which try to drown the verdict of that self-critical factor. The might of the thought goes here before its right.

Too high self-evaluation presents, thus, an unconscious attempt at overcoming an inadequacy feeling, or, better, at bridging the gap between demands on oneself and the ability to fulfill them. It is an attempt at rescuing the ego which is threatened by despair because it is aware of how incapable the person is of realizing what is exacted from within. The person is in a similar emotional situation to one in which a man who is summoned to pay pressing debts knows that he has not enough money to do so and makes himself believe that he is a very rich man.

To try to bring the megalomaniac to see his own personality and achievements as small and insignificant would not only be hopeless, but also psychologically unjust. It would be as nonsensical as to make a man who is afraid of drowning let go of his life belt. There is a better chance of success in the demonstration that there is no real danger or that the power of the person is sufficient to reach the shore. Paradoxically enough, the point of therapeutic departure in such cases is the encouragement of the person who seems to be over-self-confident. In other words, the patient has to be convinced that he has enough valuable qualities and merits so that the flight into self-aggrandizement appears superfluous. The East European Jews have a proverbial saying that proves that their psychological insight into the hidden motivation of megalomania reaches deeper than that of modern psychiatry. They say to a man who is too proud of his qualities or achievements: "Don't make yourself so big! You are not so small" *("Mach dich nicht so gross! Du bist nicht so klein").*

TWO

After the puzzle of the haunting melody was solved—at least as far as my psychological curiosity went—I continued to study the life of Mahler, I did not know why. I collected books, magazine and newspaper articles, made notes about characteristic features in his life, copied anecdotes about him I ran across in contemporary biographies and interviewed people who had known him. This was easy

in the city where he lived most of his life, but I also tried to find such persons in Amsterdam and New York later on and asked them to talk about him. Did I want to write a biography of the composer? It seemed so because I searched wherever I could for material about him. While I worked on other books, I never neglected to look up whatever material on Mahler there was in the libraries of the cities in which I lived. There is hardly anything about the composer in the libraries of Vienna, Berlin, The Hague, Amsterdam and New York I have not read. When for private or professional reasons I came to places where Mahler had lived, such as Leipzig, Olmütz, Kassel, Laibach, Prague, Budapest and Hamburg, I searched in the archives or local papers for unnoticed and unknown material, and I sometimes succeeded in unearthing some things of this kind. The pretense, self-deception or rationalization—I do not know what to call it—that I planned to write a biography of Mahler vanished when Alma Maria's *Erinnerungen und Briefe* of her husband were published in 1940. While I read that book and made excerpts from it, I realized I had never really intended to write a biography.

Seen from the outside and seen superficially, some compulsions might appear as hobbies even to oneself, but there are certain symptomatic features that mark the difference. I realized at last that my interest in Mahler had compulsive traits. What had I to do with that composer? It seems his personality as well as his music had some fascination for me. The interest in both, a mixture of analytic curiosity and of a feeling of psychological affinity (I felt attracted and repelled), sometimes gave me the impression that there was something akin to his personality in me, while at other times I felt worlds remote from him.

I found myself especially interested in the obsessional or compulsive traits of Mahler. I had met with enough evidence for the existence and effects of obsessive symptoms in the material I studied concerning the concept of the Second Symphony. I ran across many other features of this kind in collecting biographical data about the composer. A few years after that incident on the Semmering, I imagined I would some day write a psychoanalytic study on Mahler's obsessional neurosis. Finally, indeed a few months after Abraham's death, I decided that what I really wanted to write was a report and an analytic study of my own experience of that haunting melody,

to compare the banal incident with the psychology of inspiration and to analyze the unconscious emotions in both cases—something similar to the content of the preceding chapters.

A Latin writer says: *"Habent sua fata libelli"* ("Books have their destinies"). He means, books have certain effects and repercussions, exert an influence on the lives of individuals and nations. It seems to me that the reactions evoked by a published book are psychologically less interesting than the processes of conception and elaboration and the effects of the work upon the writer himself, in other words, the emotional processes in the author.

The outline and main features of that book were clear to me as soon as I had gained insight into the nature of my reactions. It took me a quarter of a century to finish the book or rather even to begin it. This means that in those twenty-five years I always thought of writing it, but did not do it. One of my patients once said about his symptom of procrastination, "Instead of working I am spending my time regretting that I don't work." Well, it was not as bad as that in my case, because in those twenty-five years I worked much, and wrote quite a number of books and articles besides averaging ten hours of daily psychoanalytic practice, but I did not work on that particular book and I regretted it. Besides collecting material, I jotted down some notes and observations, miscellaneous thoughts, but I did not even try to write a first draft of the planned study.

No, it was not a simple case of procrastination as many previous ones when I had postponed writing a book. I was, so to speak, an expert in procrastination. I know from my own experience what it feels like to want to do a certain thing and to let oneself be diverted from it by a thousand trifling incidents. I knew the sabotage and frustrating tricks of the gremlins within us, the pretexts and self-excuses, the parade of reasons why the thing should better be done at another time. I knew that kind of shadowboxing with oneself and the maliciousness of objects necessary to the writing, the disappearance of notes and the mysterious loss of fountain pens, etc. I had often procrastinated in writing books until they had no leg to stand on and had to be buried before they were born.

This kind of procrastination in the case of the study on Mahler came much later. Then all possible and several impossible reasons presented themselves why the work had better be postponed, and it was characteristic that those reasons came from opposite sides: the study was too insignificant, considered as an idea, and should therefore wait until more important and original thoughts raised it to a higher level of research, or it was a contribution of such importance and originality that it should mature slowly and had to be carefully prepared. The time for it had not yet come, I said to myself; it had to wait until the interest in Mahler was strong enough, or the time for the book had passed because so much had been published about the composer. Furthermore, when would I find the time to examine and select the material, search through the abundance of excerpts, notes, clippings and articles filling many folders? On the other hand, much of the collected material had been lost on my flight from the Nazis, and I had to wait until I could replace it by new study in libraries and archives. There was the difficulty of presentation, a problem of style and architecture. An inner experience of my own had to be presented. The question of why this melody emerged and haunted me had to be compared with the story of that melody in the life of its composer, and then the underlying unconscious processes had to be analyzed and their subterranean connections demonstrated. As far as I knew, nothing of this kind had ever been attempted in analytic literature.

But all these doubts, considerations and reflections came later. At first there was the realization that there was an invisible block on the way by which I wanted to walk to my destination. There was something unknown that prevented me from writing a book for which everything was prepared and clear in my thoughts. Year followed year; the block did not yield. I confess that I did nothing in the way of self-analysis to discover the nature of the unknown obstacle. My resistance against such self-scrutiny did not express itself in a scarcity of ideas, because I frequently had the fleeting notion that the block must be somewhere connected with the subject matter of the book, and my analytic experience and knowledge told me that the inhibition must be rooted in some unconscious obsession thought or obsessive anxiety. The resistance showed itself rather in not paying attention to those vague notions about the nature of the book. There is a comical colloquialism in Viennese jargon, comparable to the funny sayings of Samuel Goldwyn ("Include me out!"). It advises how to deal with certain matters: *"Gor net ignorieren"* = "not even ignore."

I first told myself that I must do something about this situation,

when I found what is at the roots of such blocks during the analysis of a very interesting patient. This was a woman in her forties with many nervous symptoms which receded and, except for inconspicuous remnants, evaporated during a long psychoanalysis. There was, however, one thing we could not master in our common work. As a young girl, the patient had conceived the idea of a historical novel which she had fully worked out in her mind. She could recite the novel, which was kept in rhythmical prose, word for word from memory. For twenty years she had worked on this story in her thoughts, on every adjective and verb so that its style was like silver, refined, hammered and shaped, until it had gained the most appropriate form. She spent a few hours of psychoanalysis reciting it, and I know that it was exactly the text as it was written later on. One evening she recited the whole novel from memory before an audience of several hundred people for a philanthropic cause. In those twenty years she could not write a single word of the novel. In spite of her burning desire to write and publish the book, she was entirely unable to work on it. Something mysterious prevented her from writing a single sentence of this book, although she could very well compose short stories, essays and so on. Once she attempted to force herself to write it by putting herself into a kind of voluntary prison. She asked a friend to shut her up in one room that was comfortably furnished and equipped with writing material, but without books and other things which could distract her attention. She stayed there fourteen days without writing one sentence but daydreaming of the book. While analysis could remove or mitigate her nervous symptoms, this block remained unchanged and uninfluenced.

Some years passed in which I did not see the patient. She came back to me after the Hitler regime had deprived her of all possessions and her marriage had gone to pieces. The lonely and quickly aging woman was able to write the novel now, after a few weeks of analysis. The work was finished in two months and published. It became clear early during her analysis that an unconscious obsessive idea prevented the patient from writing and publishing the novel. Her anxiety, connected with the magic consequences of reaching her aim, was so intense that she could not conquer it in spite of her excellent insight into its origin and motivations. This instance is mentioned here only to give the reader an idea of the obstinacy and tenacity of certain obsessive thoughts and anxieties. In some cases

such obsessions suddenly collapse after a certain saturation point is reached, especially when the patient has become unconsciously satisfied with the measure of self-imposed unconscious suffering. Thus, the Russians threw off suddenly the yoke of the Romanovs with whose tyrannical regime they had put up many centuries.

Such an obsessional fear, or a magical obsessive idea, was in the underground of my block of writing the little book on Mahler. The content of the obsessive fear, its text, as it were, was entirely unknown to me for several years, although I was aware of its existence and felt its effects clearly enough in the inhibition to write the book. I did not doubt, also, that there was a piece of irrational magical thinking that prevented me from doing what I wished, but all attempts to probe into the mysterious menace failed. There was, it seemed, an impenetrable wall. Those attempts, I have to admit, though frequent, were short-lived and not very energetically undertaken, as if something in me was reluctant to descend into that subterranean vault.

When it finally dawned upon me what the nature of the unconscious, magical fear was, it was while I was again occupied in my thoughts with Mahler's life. It is thus necessary to return once more to this composer's personality, to certain experiences and characteristic traits of this second self. Only after following those threads through the texture of that other life, will the seam between the obsessive thoughts of Mahler and my own magical fears become palpable.

THREE

Was Mahler a believer? The answer is clearly no, if the expression must have the connotation of belief or faith in a definite religion or creed. Alfred Roller tells a characteristic anecdote. He once asked Mahler why he did not compose a Mass. The artist was taken aback. "Do you believe that I could do that? Well, why not? But no. There is the Credo. I could not do that." But after a rehearsal of the Eighth Symphony he cheerfully told Roller, "You see this is my Mass!" Bruno Walter, who was his friend for so many years, says he could not be called believing because he lacked the quiet security in faith.[5] He could not deny the existence and efficiency of evil and

[5] Alfred Roller, *Die Bildnisse von Gustav Mahler* (Wien, 1922), p. 26.

cruel powers in nature and could not reconcile them with the existence of a God who was almighty and kind. He sometimes found peace of mind in his music. Sometimes all such problems seemed to be solved in the creation of tunes. Yet in the middle of conducting one of his symphonies he felt the upsurge of a rebellious wave against God and thought of the words of a Polish poet: "You are not the father of this world, but the czar!"

Bruno Walter was astonished when he discovered that, in the last years, Mahler showed signs of a superstitious attitude with regard to his own destiny. "Until then," writes Walter, "I had never observed even a trace of a superstition in his clear and strong mind."[6] Walter's surprise is understandable, not only because unconscious superstitions can well co-exist with sober, clear and strongly rational thinking, but also because Mahler was unusually reticent and restrained about such beliefs. Also here is a double attitude or rather a simultaneity of two opposite attitudes: the composer was sometimes very ready to speak of those convictions while at others he closed up like a clam. It is also doubtful whether Walter would have considered expressions of certain beliefs superstitious and not as anticipations, visions or presentiments.

Mahler himself would have energetically denied that he was superstitious. Yet, he was convinced that supernatural powers had influence upon his life and his work and rejected a purely mechanical and rational concept of existence. He was convinced that he often foresaw coming events in his life—we would today add unconsciously—and that he gave them form and shape in his symphonies and songs. He called his own production an *"anticipando* of life." The coining of this phrase is certainly influenced by Goethe whose *Conversations with Eckermann* was one of Mahler's favorite books. Goethe often spoke of such anticipation, or rather of the demonic element in human nature, and defines it as that "which cannot be resolved." He realizes that the demonic element manifests itself especially in events. Discussing a dream of Eckermann's which proved to be prophetic, Goethe says (October 7, 1827): "But such things are in nature although we have not yet the clue to them. We all walk around in secrets. We are surrounded by an atmosphere about which we know nothing; we don't know what operates in it and how it communicates with our mind. This much is certain, that in

[6] Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler* (Vienna, 19—), p. 92.

peculiar circumstances the tentacles of our soul reach beyond their physical limitations and that we can have a presentiment of and even a real glance into the future."

Mahler's conviction that in many of his compositions he anticipated events took many forms, it concerned his own life as a whole as well as particular blows of destiny. The three hammer blows of his Sixth Symphony are sound symbols of those blows: the first the strongest; the third, the death blow to the expiring, here the weakest. But there are so many such instances in which Mahler sees anticipation of future vicissitudes that I shall restrict myself to the sketch of two or three of them.

In the summer of 1901, Mahler composed the music for some songs by the German poet Friedrich Rückert, amongst them the first three poems known as *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Infants). Rückert had lost two children, Ernst and Luise, and wrote as many as four hundred and forty-eight songs expressing his grief. Mahler's older daughter, Maria Anna, was born in November, 1902. She died of diphtheria in 1907.

Mahler believed that he had anticipated the death of this child whom he dearly loved. Mahler was not married at the time of the composition of these three songs, and had, of course, no child. His friend Guido Adler reports that Mahler had told him many years later, "I put myself in my thoughts into the situation of a man whose own child has died. When I really lost my daughter, I could not have written those songs any more."

Is there a psychological explanation for the connection between the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder* at a time when Mahler had no children and the death of his daughter seven years later? There is, of course, no sign or miracle, no anticipation and divination of that blow of destiny in the succession of the two events. When the child died, Mahler took the composition of the three songs as manifestation of a presentiment or preknowledge of the future blow. If there is no causal connection between the composition and the death, something still remains to be explained, namely, the composer's conviction that that event had been anticipated in his work.

Why did Mahler choose those songs? But at this time he also composed the music for other poems by Rückert. *"Ich athmet einen linden Duft," "Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder"* and that fine and

resigned song *"Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen"* were written in the same summer. Something, then, in the wording and the atmosphere of the *Kindertotenlieder* must have appealed to Mahler. What was it? We evoke the subtlety of those very moving songs and their grief whose expression is controlled with great power of will from the opening lines of the first song "Once More the Sun Will Dawn so Bright" to the song "In such a tempest, in such a storm they rest as in their mother's arms." The latent intensity of feeling, of a deep emotion, is the stronger sensed, the more apparent it is that their violent outbreak is avoided. This self-withdrawal and self-restraint contrast with the knowledge that an intense mourning is again and again reawakened by memories of the terrible loss. In this form, the past when the children were still alive intrudes into the present, and can only be mastered when it is again felt as present. We call this renewed emotional effort in which we overcome the loss of a beloved object the work of mourning. This work demands to be done on each occasion which reminds the survivor of the love object.

It cannot be that Mahler anticipated the death of a child not yet born. There is a detail whose psychological evaluation interferes with the assumption of such a prophetic gift. The Rückert poems speak of the death of two children, not of one, but only one child died seven years after the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder,* and then Mahler really had two daughters. When Mahler worked on the orchestration of the last songs during the summer, the two girls played happily outside the cottage, and Mahler's wife asked how he could work on so tragic a subject when he heard the voices of his two children, but he answered that this made no difference. The future tragedy was then, it seems, not anticipated and did not cast its shadow ahead into the happy present. His remark of later years that in imagination he put himself in the place of a father whose child had died, points even more in the direction of psychological interpretation. No, it is not anticipation of the future, but unconscious remembrance of the past that made Mahler compose those songs. Some words or passages in Rückert's songs must have reminded the composer of a familiar situation, perhaps even of sentences he had heard as a child and had forgotten.

There are, however, two remarks of Mahler's which may be psychologically informative. The first was made to his friend Natalie

at the time of the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder.* Mahler said that he felt sorry for himself while he composed them and felt sorry for the world which would hear them.[7]

When Mahler read the Rückert poems, unconscious memory traces were revivified of the grief and sorrow of his parents who had lost two children when he himself was a child. One of Mahler's brothers, Isidor, perished in an accident, and another, Ernst, one year younger than Gustav, died in 1874. Here is thus the place for the number two because, as in Rückert's case, there were two children who had died and Mahler had witnessed his parents' mourning when he was a boy. It is not likely that Mahler consciously remembered the emotional expressions of his parents' grief, but Rückert's poems unconsciously stirred up something of those past inner experiences.

I assume that there was an added determining factor in this revival of a caved-in memory: Mahler had certainly read in the introduction to Rückert's cycle of poems, or in biographical footnotes, that the name of the boy who had died was Ernst, which was also the name of Mahler's own brother. It is possible that Mahler either remembered the sorrow of his father at the loss of this child and forgot it again, or that he did not consciously connect the poems with that memory. In place of the conscious memory of his parents' sorrow at the tragic event, Mahler identified with his father. This is indicated by his remark to Guido Adler that he put himself into the situation of a father whose child has died. The revival of a memory trace of the deep mourning of his parents provided then the intensity of the emotional expression through the process of identification.

We can go beyond this psychological assumption when we remember the second remark of Mahler about the *Kindertotenlieder:* he felt sorry for himself when he composed the songs and sorry for the world which would hear them, because they were so sad. If my assumption of unconscious identification with his father is correct, behind that remark is the memory trace of a forgotten or caved-in intense pity the boy Gustav felt for his father at the time of Ernst's death, and even perhaps an unconscious memory that the relatives and neighbors in Iglau (then = the world) gave expression of sincere compassion for his mourning parents. The sensi-

[7] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen,* p. 166.

tive boy Gustav must have unconsciously experienced the mourning of his parents, too, in addition to his own grief about his younger brother's death. The attention of the boy was, of course, directed to the goings on in his family circle, but he must also have shared the emotions of his parents, these same emotions which resounded in the man so many years later. These feelings which were not fully expressed and the words which were unsayable come alive in the music of the Rückert songs. Some passages in those poems, some everyday sentences have perhaps revivified the dormant memory traces. The identification of which Mahler was aware ("I put myself . . . into the situation of a man . . .") thus conceals an old one, and is a repetition of an old childhood identification which had remained unconscious.

Such unconscious identifications are frequently observed by psychoanalysts in the place of unconscious memories, and sometimes take the form of symptoms or emotional experiences. Here is an instance: A patient rested on a couch and watched her children playing about in the same room. She felt sad because she thought that she had perhaps soon to leave them. At the time she suffered from continued severe vaginal bleeding and was afraid that she had cancer. Some time after examination had proved that her illness was not malign, she remembered a scene from her childhood. Her mother had been resting on a couch and had looked at her, then a small girl, and her sister, with a sad glance. Mother had died of cancer a short time afterwards. The little girl must have unconsciously perceived and understood the melancholy expression of her mother's glance. The dormant memory now came back to her in place of her identification with her sick mother.

When Mahler read that cycle of poems, he must have felt some woeful emotions. His explanation that he put himself into the place of a father whose children have died is already an attempt at explaining to himself and others where those strange feelings come from. At the same time the sentence approaches as near as possible the unconscious process of identification with his father.

Analytic experiences encourage us to guess more than this. We know that children whose siblings have died and who witness the mourning and grief of their parents feel vivid emotions akin to envy and jealousy toward their dead brother or sister, as if they wished they themselves had died or that their parents would mourn for

them in such a deeply felt manner. It is easy to recognize in this reaction the continuation of feelings of rivalry and competition with the sibling when he was still alive. More intense than this tendency is perhaps the wish to be loved and mourned by the parents as much as the child who has died. Here is yet another process of unconscious identification, that with the dead brother.

There is, it is true, no trace of such an unconscious identification for the hearer of the *Kindertotenlieder*—at least as long as he listens to the songs with conscious attention only. But in the lullaby of the fifth song, which evokes the impression that the children rest in their grave as in their mother's house, the desire for peace, rest and death, the same desire that will sing in the *Lied von der Erde* a few years later already dawns in that music. The expression of its deep feeling is here manfully checked and controlled, but reveals itself in the restrained form the more effectively. It is the shadow of a past whose intense emotions were forgotten, not the forecast of the future which made Mahler choose the Rückert cycle of the *Kindertotenlieder*.

There are, however, at least some psychological factors which point into the future. When Mahler composed those songs, he had just passed his fortieth year, and in the bachelor the wish for a wife, home and children had awakened. Soon afterwards he made the acquaintance of a young, beautiful girl, Alma Maria Schindler, with whom he fell in love and whom he married in 1902.[8] With the thought of marriage and fatherhood, the memory of his own father and his destiny was awakened. Together with those memory traces old, caved-in emotions were revived and the fear of losing his children as his father had done. The expectancy of impending calamity is thus the representative emotion of this perspective of the future. It is not a prophetic gift, but unconscious fear which was responsible for Mahler's reaction.

When, five years later, Mahler's daughter died, he connected the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder* with the possibility of prophetic anticipation. In reality an old feeling of fear had been confirmed. Instead of thinking: I have been afraid before that a child of mine would die, he thought he had anticipated the real event. No mysterious prophetic gift made him foresee what the future had

[8] He was already secretly engaged in 1901 and married in March of the following year.

in store for him, but his unconscious anxiety, and this emotion was again a remnant of an old fear. It originated in a return to suppressed memories. It was, of course, unavoidable that he had to think that he anticipated the catastrophe five years before when he composed the *Kindertotenlieder*. He had to think that he had already experienced those intense feelings of mourning and grief when his little girl died. He really had experienced them, but not at the composition of the Rückert songs, but long before it when he himself was a child and identified with his father.

FOUR

For the psychologist it is not enough to say a person is ambitious. He wants to know the aim and objects of that ambition, its origin and evolution, its motives and manifestations—in short, its psychology and psychopathology, yes, also its pathological or morbid expressions. It was certainly psychologically important that a patient, a young violin virtuoso, had the ambition to play the Beethoven violin concerto perfectly, but it was not less significant that the young man was by a superstitious fear prevented from playing it until he had reached the age at which Beethoven composed it.

Writers, painters and composers have often reported how such superstitious beliefs block or propel their creative production, how mysterious connections in their thoughts, obsessive bridges between two or more ideas intrude and interfere with their artistic activity. Some like to present such phenomena as trifling, as bagatelles, and make fun of themselves, but others take them seriously, are helped or handicapped by them. They really seem to be a byplay or a vignette, but whatever their character may be, they reveal important features of the artist's personality, the more significant, the more intimate they are.

Here is an instance of obsessional thought accompanying an artistic creation, first conceived as a whim, playfully treated, but nevertheless taken seriously by the artist: In August, 1899, Mahler bought some ground at the Woerthersee in Carinthia. He planned to build a house there, and to live there during the summer months and work on his symphonies. During the following summer the composer lived in the Villa Antonia and had a little hut nearby in the

middle of the forest where he spent many hours daily at his work on his Fourth Symphony.

In that summer of 1900, while the building of the house at the lake progressed, Mahler, at first, had great difficulties in his work. He was quite upset about it, even desperate, and feared that he would never be able to accomplish anything remarkable. He already foresaw "his superstitious fear realized that he would have a house for composition, but would not be able to write."[9] He could not start his work for a whole week. Later on when the block was removed, Mahler told his friend Natalie that it had occurred to him that he would get into a race with the building of the house. At first he had been desperate that the building was progressing more quickly than the composition of the symphony, but he soon caught up with it and finally he was in advance of it, close to the end, that is, at the finale of the Fourth Symphony. He had finished the composition in August, 1900. He was not cheerful, but, as always after the completion of a symphony, depressed because he had lost an essential content of life.[10]

Have we any justification in considering that race with the building of a house a significant expression of obsessional thinking? Superficially seen, it is just a playful connection between two spheres which have nothing in common and which were joined very arbitrarily and capriciously. How childish can a man of forty, a serious artist and celebrated director of the Vienna Opera, get? One obtains better insight into the meaning of such playful thought connections when one compares them with the trains of thought we regularly meet with in our obsessive patients. Here is an instance: A man thinks that he will buy certain shares if he arrives at the next street corner before the bus he sees coming along, and that he will not buy them if the bus reaches the corner first. It is easy to recognize the character of such an alternative. It is a kind of modern oracle or rather the neurotic counterpart of the oracle as we know it from the history of ancient religions.

But is there any concealed sense in such nonsense as the race with a house? Yes, and we succeed in most cases of our psychoanalytic practice in guessing the secret meaning, in reconstructing it from the remnants and distortions of the original underlying thought.

[9] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerungen*, p. 136.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

This analytic work of the restoration of the original thought is comparable to the reconstruction of an ancient inscription in a language of which only certain words are known to us, while the meaning of others has to be guessed.

The first impression of that race is of a whimsical thought, perhaps: It will be interesting to see which will be completed first, the house or my symphony. But if it is not more than such a capricious thought, how can one explain the very intense emotions of the composer, for instance, that he is entirely desperate when the building of the house is ahead of the symphony and that he is very satisfied when the symphony approaches its completion before the house? A mere play with an indifferent thought leaves such strong emotions unexplained.

We remember at the appropriate moment that the decisions of the gods in the ancient oracles were also connected with seemingly unimportant events, that they also joined two things which had no connection with each other, made the outcome of an enterprise dependent on something which seemed in no way related to it. It seems that Mahler in that race with the building of the house made a similar magical connection between two remote spheres in his thoughts as the oracle at Delphi construed. We sense that here are no trifles, but that important interests of the composer are at stake. But what is the character of the decision that is to be determined by the race?

The emotions which Mahler expressed leave no doubt that he wished the symphony to be completed before the house. The original text of the obsessive thought underlying the play of imagination becomes clearer when we fill the gap, at which we guess, with the idea of reward, perhaps: If I finish the symphony before the house, then I deserve to possess a beautiful cottage at the lake. The despair when the symphony was behind the building is psychologically understandable: it is to be compared to the extreme expression of the inner dissatisfaction of a man, aware that he has not fulfilled what he expected or demanded from himself. I once observed a little boy to whom a chocolate candy was promised after he had picked up all his toys. When the chocolate was offered to him before he had done so, he refused it and said, really quite desperately, "But I didn't pick up my things!"

If this psychological reconstruction is correct, the sequence of

work and reward must be discovered in other features, because it rarely happens that such a magical connection manifests itself in only a single symptomatic expression. Natalie Bauer-Lechner reports the following from the time of the composition of the Third Symphony. Mahler had taken a box of cigars from Hamburg to be smoked during his summer vacation. When he was satisfied with the day's work, he smilingly put a cigar at the dinner table, allowing himself to smoke it after the meal. When he finished a major part, a movement for instance, an excursion for a whole day was arranged as a reward.

The emotional premise for the neurotic oracle of the grotesque contest with the house is, of course, that Mahler must have felt somehow guilty, because he had bought the ground and ordered the building of the house at all. It was as if he had allowed himself something that was outside the limitations of permitted self-indulgence, and he had to prove to himself by hard work that he deserved it. The beautiful house on the lake in the middle of the forest was an ideal place for creative work that demanded quietness and concentration. It is a confirmation of our psychological assumption when Natalie tells us in her report that Mahler, looking from the balcony of the new house to the meadows and the lake below, said, "It is too beautiful. One does not allow oneself so much." Natalie, who lived with the family at that time, observed that Mahler felt it deep down, almost "as an accusation to be thus privileged."

We are here on the track of that unconscious guilt feeling which prevented him from enjoying the new house freely. In order to understand it, one must remember the very poor circumstances in which his family lived when Gustav was a child, and the permanent worries about money that filled his student years and accompanied him far into the years of maturity, during which the burden of supporting his younger brothers and sisters was on his shoulders. "One does not allow oneself that" means: One feels guilty of possessing such a beautiful house when one thinks of the poverty in which one's parents lived all their lives. It is as if one were forbidden to enjoy comfort and luxury because an unconscious reaction compares one's own privileged situation with that of one's nearest and dearest. Natalie reports that a few years before, in the summer of 1896, she and Mahler passed a few miserable peasant huts and the composer pointed to one of them, saying, "Do you see, in such a pitiful little house I was born; the windows did not even have glass. Before the

house was a wide water puddle. The little village Kalischt and a few huts were all that was in the neighborhood."[11]

To understand the full significance of the neurotic oracle, biographical, i.e., historical, features will be helpful. We know that Mahler did most of his compository work during July and August because his duties as director and conductor of the Opera demanded all his energy. Ten days before the end of the summer vacation, in 1899, Mahler had started to compose the Fourth Symphony. He suffered tortures because the time for his work was so short, and he was haunted by a fear that he would not be up to "the gigantic work which towered over him in its first outline." This fear increased to such an extent that he could not work in the last days of summer. A remnant of that fear remained and pursued him when he thought he would continue the work the next summer, and he said, "Thus I shall have my house and the peace and all that is needed—but the artistic creator will be missing."

When in the first weeks of the next summer he really could not begin the work again, he was depressed by the fear that he would not be able to write any more. But this fear that he would have the house and all else needed, but would not be able to write, is the soil from which the neurotic oracle sprang. The steps from the superstitious fear to the race with the building of the house are not difficult to guess.

The missing link becomes obvious when, in the place of the superstitious fear which expresses the belief that the possession of the house is forbidden, a formula appears which presents a conditional permission to have the house. The beautiful cottage appears then as a reward for work done well and on time. The transition from the fear: I will have the house, but will not write (I don't deserve the house) to the thought: When I work well and enough, I deserve to possess the house—uses old, paved ways of thinking. The fear was not conquered, but submerged when the new idea—I can have the house after I have achieved something great—appeared. The conditional form of the obsessional formula at the end runs: I deserve the house if I finish the symphony before the house is completed. First work, then play. The typical form of a self-promised reward. We now understand that the race with the house is not mere play with a thought. At its roots are the decisive drives, the real vital

11 The house in Kalischt was burned down many years ago.

interests of a life: Mahler could allow himself the possession of the house only after he had finished his symphony, after he had proved to himself that he deserved it.

But if Mahler had that superstitious fear from the start, why did he buy the ground and order the building of the house? The answer to this question will not be possible without insight into the psychological nature of obsessive fears. There is the typical phenomenon that obsessional characters can have two opposite beliefs or opinions about the same thing. Mahler certainly believed he would not be able to write any more. That fear was "real" in the sense that it influenced his mood and his work. At the same time, on another mental level, Mahler did not believe that his fear would be realized. It was strong, but not strong enough to prevent him from planning the building of the cottage. In the end the active and self-assertive tendencies were victorious. A patient spoke in a similar case of a "first" and "second" reality. In the first reality she knew very well that her obsessive fears and doubts were of a magical kind, in the second reality she was convinced that they were entirely founded on valid reasons.

We have to conceive of the order to build the house as the first victory over the invisible antagonist, that superstitious fear. After this conquest the fear returned with reactively intensified power and expressed itself in the blocking of creative production. The depression after finishing the symphony is, so to speak, the rearguard fighting of the enemy.

In our analytic investigation of those neurotic oracles, we probe deeper into the unconscious meaning of such strange symptoms, and we assume that there are different emotional levels on which the determining powers work. On the deeper level to which we now descend, the possession of the house has another secret meaning. In the unconscious area of thoughts, as in that of dreams, the house is a symbolical representative of a woman. If we follow this leading thought, we arrive at another original content of that superstitious fear. The obvious "text" would be: I shall have a woman, but I shall not be able to compose. Doubts as to this are perhaps awakened in many bachelors who think of marriage when they approach their fortieth year. Deeper than on this level must be another fear, easily to be conjectured when one considers the unconscious connotation of the expressions of that fear—for instance, in the sentence ". . . I

shall have the house, but the creator will be missing." The unmistakable secondary meaning would then be: "I shall have a wife, but shall not be potent." The race with the house also retains on this level the character of an ordeal, in the sense of a decision by a higher power: If I finish my work, then I can be certain that I can enjoy having a wife, I can allow myself a female companion. The one faculty to create stands here as unconscious representative for the other, sexual one.

But where is the slightest proof for the assumption that Mahler unconsciously compared his creative production with sexual potency, and that this comparison is one of the essential factors of the fear that he will not be able to work after having the house? I shall not refer to the experience of all psychoanalysts who find numerous instances of such unconscious comparisons in their practice, but quote only a single instance that proves that thought connection in Mahler's conscious mind. In a letter to Bruno Walter, Mahler talks about philosophizing on music and compares it with the brooding of a man who has produced a child and ponders whether it is really a child, whether it was begot with the right intentions and so on. "He just loved and could. That's enough. And when one does not love and cannot do it, then no child comes. Also that is enough! And as one is and can—thus the child becomes. Another time that's enough! My Sixth Symphony is finished. I believe, I could. A thousand times —that's enough!" This was written six years later in a cheerful mood, and Mahler then had a wife and two children.

More and more direct proofs that Mahler's fear about the house was unconsciously connected with a hypochondriacal fear of impotence? One year later he was secretly engaged to Alma Maria. In her memories his widow relates that the composer, who was then forty years old, was seized by a panic at the thought that he was "too old."[12] Alma Maria's words leave no doubts about the sexual meaning of this fear. "He had lived the life of an ascetic and was completely at a loss . . ." They were both sad and without a guide. "Oh," he said, "if only you had had a love affair or were a widow, it would be all right." But Alma was a virgin, and the composer had never touched a woman before. They "tormented ourselves not

12 Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler, Memories and Letters* (New York, 1946), p. 28.

from love so much as fear of love. At last the only natural solution occurred. The consequences soon followed. . . ."

It is not our aim to present a psychoanalytic study of Mahler's personality. The task was to follow a single theme through its many and multiform shapes, certain obsessional traits in which the conflicting tendencies in Mahler were reflected. All light at our disposal will fall on this single subject, while other sides of his life and his personality remain in the shadow and half-shadow which is their place and home. From the nightly and nightmarish area of the unconscious, from the area of concealed emotional depth only a few obsessional features will be brought to the daylight. A consuming ambition drives Mahler forward, an ambition which has to wrestle not only with enemies outside, but with a powerful antagonist within himself. An aggressive and unbending force had to fight with another force that threatened to paralyze him and filled him with anxiety. Such a great contest between two intense emotional trends mirrors itself not only in the development and the conduct of life, but also in seemingly trifling traits, as in that bet with himself about the finishing of the Fourth Symphony and the building of the house. Even in such trivial side shows the great antagonists continue their fights. In the analytic interpretation of that trait, here artificially isolated and investigated, it became clear which drives compelled the composer not only to run, but to run a race with a house.

FIVE

There are other instances of "signs" and "miracles" which, like the composition of the *Kindertotenlieder*, appeared to Mahler as manifestations of that "*anticipando* of life," but there are more which were conceived of by him as favorable auguries or presages. Such interpretations frequently made him decide what to do because they seemed to hint at the direction in which he should go. To continue the thread of the previous chapter, the house in which Mahler spent his summer and vacation months—the only ones in which he could give himself to composition—retained a kind of symbolic or magical significance even later on when the cottage at the Woerther Lake was sold. When he searched for an appropriate cottage to fulfill his demands for seclusion and quietness, he found an old house in the

village Alt-Schluderbach in Tyrol over whose door was the Latin inscription: *Audisti opprobrium forum, Domine omnes cogitationes adversum me* ("Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord, and all their imaginations against me" [Lam. 3:61]). Was it not as if a supernatural voice spoke here, was this not a divine hint for the composer who as director of the Opera and as conductor was the object of so many intrigues, malicious designs and accusations in the musical circles of Vienna? It was at this house that Mahler worked on *Das Lied von der Erde*. But did those words not remind him before, at the time of the conception of the preceding symphony, the Eighth, of the verses:

De profundis clamavi ad te . . .
Veni, sancte spiritus!

From the depth I called you . . .
Come, Holy Ghost!

The productivity of the composer is, for us laymen, full of mysteries, but it has almost the same quality for the artist himself. Mahler was as much puzzled and surprised by strange happenings during his work as other musicians. He often wondered about that "second self" which produces something for which the "first self" searched in vain. He discovered many instances proving that that other part of himself was unconsciously productive during the months of hibernation, "with all the terrifying" dreams of the theater management, and that he could pick up his work where he had left it the last summer. He repeated, "One does not compose, one is composed," and he felt during that feverish work on the Eighth Symphony as if the music "was dictated to me."

Many, if not all, of those strange and puzzling things that happened to him are easily explainable. They are either coincidences of time and place or productions in which his unconscious will and memory had a decisive part. He was able to see confirmations and auguries in purely accidental details of everyday life and attribute to them a secret meaning. Here is one representative instance which he described himself in a letter to a friend, Anna Mildenburg (July 9, 1896): Mahler searched several weeks for a programmatic title for his Third Symphony. He considered "Gaya Sciencia," "Summer Night's Dream," "Summer Marches In," "Pan Awakens." A letter he received from Anna Mildenburg had on its envelope the postmark PAN 30. At first Mahler did not see the number, but only the abbreviation P-A-N (= Post Amt Nummer for post office no.) and, although he himself tried to minimize the significance, he considered that coincidence very remarkable because Pan was just the title he wanted to give to his symphonic work. The letters P-A-N which, as he writes, were at first entirely incomprehensible to him, only made sense to him when he read them together and interpreted them as the name of the ancient Greek god. When he saw some deep meaning in the fact that the postmark showed just these three letters, he attributed significance to an external coincidence in the best manner of the obsessional neurotics and operated in his thoughts as if the letters could build bridges between two remote spheres with the help of word plays. We are familiar with such a technique because we find it again in humorous riddles or jokes. Here is an instance of a puzzle of this kind: What lies between Pa and Ma? Answer: Nora. The solution: PANORAMA.

Here is another clear instance proving that the miniature miracle during the process of composition uses the help of an unconscious memory, of a memory of which the composer is not aware: The first song Mahler considered worthy of being published, the folklike dance tune, *Hans und Grete,* composed in 1883, provides an instance of the share unconscious factors have in his musical production. The second stanza and the music occurred to him one evening. The following night he suddenly awakened, and the first and the third stanza, text and tune, were fully and clearly present to him. He jotted them down and saw in the morning that he need not make the slightest correction or change. In the summer of 1906, Mahler had (as so often in the first weeks of his vacation) a block in writing. When he entered his work hut one morning, suddenly the whole chorale of the beginning of the Eighth Symphony, *Veni, Creator Spiritus,* occurred to him. It was a real inspiration that overcame him the moment he crossed the threshold of that studio in the woods, and he composed the whole chorus to the half-forgotten words. After that eruptive first theme had surprised, one would almost say had assaulted him, he continued the work in a kind of blissful feverishness, "as if it had been dictated to him."

Besides that sudden inspiration, there are two minor "miracles"

during the conception of and the work on that symphony. The first one aroused the astonishment of the composer and seemed to confirm his belief in the supernatural factor in composition. He himself spoke of it to his friends—for instance, to Ernst Deczey. While he worked on the composition of that Latin Pentecost hymn, *Veni, Creator Spiritus* (attributed to Hrabanus Maurus who lived around 784 to 856), he was as under a spell or rather a compulsion and threw himself with elementary ardor into the work. Together with the overpowering E Flat Major chord which had occurred to him, the words of the hymn presented themselves. He brought the sketch on which this main theme, that appeal to the Holy Spirit, was written, home together with a penciled draft of the general structure and division of the symphony, then still in four movements.[13] From then on he had only to jot down what his sound-vision demanded from him.

At a certain point an inner need compelled him to insert a longer orchestral interlude. Here the music overflowed the sacred text "as water the glass" (Mahler's description). The constructive thought did not coincide with the verses. He wrote in haste to his friend Dr. Fritz Löhr, who was a philologist, and asked about the text. He complained "about that damned antiquated church-book" from which he took the text.[14] Löhr called Mahler's attention to the fact that the text was incomplete and that one and one half stanzas were missing. When the composer received the complete and authentic text, which was speedily mailed from Vienna to Schluderbach, he realized to his surprise and even to his perplexity that his music which had overlapped the verses precisely covered the text. There is no reason to praise, with Mahler's biographer, Richard Specht, the "intuition" operating in such fine discernment.[15] Here, as in similar cases (for instance, in that of the song *Der Tambour G'sell*, composed about 1899), the problem is clearly one of cryptomnesia, in other words, a case of memory which has remained entirely unconscious. The individual consciously believes that nothing of that caved-in memory is known to him and, faced with it, considers it as something new. There are, nevertheless, unconscious memory traces which make their presence felt in unconscious effects.

[13] Dr. Alfred Rosenzweig shows that sketch in facsimile in an article, "How Gustav Mahler planned his Eighth Symphony," *Der Wiener Tag* (June 4, 1938).
[14] Mahler, *Briefe*, 1879-1911, p. 290 (June 21, 1906).
[15] Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler*, p. 253.

Although the text of the *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, as it was available to Mahler in that old ecclesiastical book was different, the composer must have heard or read another text of that Pentecost hymn before, and the memory that there was a part missing must have been unconsciously preserved—although the variant printed in the missal contradicted that memory. There is more reason to wonder about the power of his unconscious memory than about a mysterious gift of intuition. Freud could prove that many of his obsessive patients had an unconscious share in the production of those miraculous events or coincidences that astonished or alarmed them. They thought, for instance, of a certain person, and just at that moment they saw him turn a corner and come toward them, but they had unconsciously seen that person before the thought and had disavowed the perception. They were themselves secretly operating in the manufacturing of the "miracle" which they unconsciously conceive as an expression of their power of thought or of the might of their wishes. They behave as Mahler did when he prepared a surprise for his young wife in the fall of 1903.[16] He had composed for her the only love song he ever wrote, *Liebst du um Schönheit*. He slipped it between the pages of Wagner's *Die Walküre* which Mrs. Mahler then used to play. He waited day after day for her to find it there. But she never happened to open the score. Finally his patience gave out and he said, "I think I'll take a look at *Die Walküre* today." He opened the volume and his new song fell out. It seems to me that he showed a similar helpful hand in some surprising events which struck him as minor miracles in his creative production.

SIX

Strangely enough, some miracles lose much of their incomprehensible nature when their occurrence is tied up with a second "miracle," that is, with an event that is wonderful or a wonder. If I am allowed to insert here a little piece of analytic detective work, I would like to add a second remarkable connection which, less noisy or conspicuous than the mysterious covering of an unknown text by an overflow of music, nevertheless has strange features. How did Mahler come to the strange idea—or did the strange idea come

[16] Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler, Memories and Letters* (New York, 1946), p. 56.

to Mahler?—to combine the Latin hymn of *Veni* with the German scenes of *Faust* in his Eighth Symphony? How could he combine two different languages and a oratorio-like part as the first with an opera-like part as the second? Here not only two settings, but two different spheres and atmospheres are connected. Where is the connecting link? It is easy to philosophize and to assert that the first part is an appeal to the creative spirit, a kind of prayer to fill the artist with the power and the glory of expression, and the second is the answer, the solution in the words of the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*. We are here not so much concerned with the structure of the symphony as with the train of thought which is at the roots of the work.

In the years preceding the conception of the Eighth Symphony Mahler read Goethe's *Collected Works* with great attention and devotion. He felt, as did Goethe, that the best in a person is not that which he can grasp with his intelligence, but that part of us which leads us unconsciously, that "non-recording part of our mind," as a modern psychiatrist called it. A striving upwards propels the man to realize unfulfilled potentialities in himself. In that powerful drive to realize his ideal he is helped by another power, which Mahler called Eros. Eros is thus the supporting power which appears in the first part of the symphony in the form of the Creator Spiritus, in the second part in the shape of the Queen of Heaven, as Holy Virgin. In a letter, dated from Munich, June, 1910, when he was just working on the rehearsals of that Eighth Symphony, Mahler wrote a few sentences about that subject to his wife.[17] "You have hit the salient in Plato, sure enough. In the discourses of Socrates, Plato gives his own philosophy, which as the misunderstood 'Platonic love' has influenced thought right down the centuries to the present day. The essence of it is really Goethe's idea that all love is generative, creative, and there is a physical and spiritual generation which is the emanation of this 'Eros.' You have it in the last scene of *Faust*, presented symbolically."

We recognize here the connection in Mahler's thoughts. It is, so to speak, a continuation of the line *Veni, Creator Spiritus* to the final scene of *Faust:* Eros in its most spiritual meaning. It is also an anticipation of Freud's conception of Eros. In Freud's theory, Eros

[17] Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler, Memories and Letters* (New York, 1946), p. 268.

has, so to speak, an earthly, materialized representative which is called sexuality, a kind of errand boy who is to be sent out to take care of the tasks of Eros in everyday life. But we shall return to this part of Mahler's train of thought immediately, and are for the moment content to illuminate the stage. That which goes on behind the stage, is, it is true, much more interesting.

But did we not promise to show that there is a forgotten or neglected link between the first and the second part of the Eighth Symphony, a kind of disavowed connection in Mahler's thoughts between the hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* and the final scenes of *Faust,* between Hrabanus Maurus and Goethe? In the works by Goethe which Mahler so fervently read before the conception of the Eighth Symphony, there is a translation of that hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* which Goethe admired. The great poet characterized that hymn with the words, "an appeal to the general genius of the world."[18]

Is it too daring to assume that Mahler had read Goethe's translation of the Pentecost hymn in the *Collected Works,* had forgotten that he had read it there, and that the memory remained dormant, which, in this case, means unconscious in him? He came across the Latin text[19] somewhere later and was emotionally affected by its content. He had, it is true, forgotten that translation, but the meaning of the Latin verses was understood by him in general, while some lines remained uncomprehended by him to such an extent that he had to ask his friend Fritz to translate them for him. Their literal meaning was unknown, but the memory trace of that translation by Goethe, now forgotten, must have provided him with a knowledge of their general sense. Is it again, too daring to assume that Mahler had read and forgotten not only that translation, but also a footnote or an explanatory and biographical note to the text recording the high appreciation Goethe had for the hymn? And is it not likely that in that footnote (most editions of Goethe's *Collected Works* have such notes either after the text or in the appendix of each volume) it was mentioned that the worshiped poet had praised the hymn in a letter to his friend, the composer whose achievement Goethe appreciated or rather overappreciated? Is it not likely that this remarkable fact that the hymn was mentioned

[18] In a letter to Zelter, Feb. 18, 1821.

[19] *Cotta Jubiläums Ausgabe,* Part III, pp. 275 and 381.

in the letter to a contemporary composer awakened in Mahler ninety years later an unconscious wish to put the *Veni, Creator* into music? Is it not impossible that he already had such a vague thought when he read Goethe's translation of the hymn whose text appealed to him.

When in the summer of 1906 Mahler came to Maiernegg, in the first days of his vacation, he felt a lack of spontaneity ("not a note would come") and he had already decided to idle the holiday away when on the threshold of his workshop "the Spiritus Creator took hold of me and shook me and drove me on for the next eight weeks until my greatest work was done."[20] I venture to conjecture that the wish which had been awakened in Mahler to compose that hymn which he had read in the translation by Goethe a long time ago, a wish that had continued to exist in the composer's unconscious thoughts, had suddenly become alive, or rather had been revivified, reawakened, but this time in the form of a sudden musical inspiration. That powerful E Flat Major chord assaulted the composer, emerging, as it seemed from the void. The text and tune of that first stanza of the *Veni, Creator* were all of a sudden there, when Mahler stepped into his work hut. But in psychological reality they had been unconsciously prepared a long time, so long, as a matter of emotional fact, that they appeared as something not only surprising, but unheard of. In reality the process is one of a cryptomnestic nature, which, as we have seen, is a secret revival of a memory so successfully forgotten that its content seems to be new.

SEVEN

There needs no ghost, not even the Holy Ghost of academic psychology, to come from the grave to tell me that there is no proof for those assumptions. There is none, but so many psychological indications point in this direction! In presenting my material, I am following the illustrious pattern of Freud who sometimes at the start of a lecture liked to make a statement which seemed at first utterly incredible or paradoxical, and then offered to us, his students, so much excellent material that we were convinced of the correctness of that initial statement. Our impression at the end was often not, "Thus it could have been," but, "It must have been thus. It could not have been different." I shall try to apply this method in

[20] Letter to Alma Mahler. June 1910. Letters p. 264.

the analytic investigation of this case in which I assumed that Mahler was hiding from himself not only the fact that he had read Goethe's translation, but that, while reading it, he had the first idea of composing that hymn. If this is really a case of cryptomnesia, a kind of false forgetting, we must be able to discover traces revealing that the forgotten was nevertheless unconsciously present.

Let me first point out in what terms Mahler spoke of this, his Eighth Symphony. He calls it "a gift to the nation" and "a great joy-bringer." It seems to me that even in the wording of that evaluation of his own work there is an echo of Goethe's appraisal of the hymn as "an appeal to the general genius of the world." In a letter to Willem Mengelberg, Mahler speaks about this new symphony in the following words: "It is the greatest I have made until now. . . . Imagine that the Universe begins to sound and sing. These are not human voices any more, but planets and suns circling." From Munich, where he was conducting the general rehearsal of the Eighth Symphony, he writes to his wife: "Also here the Lord (Mahler) saw that it was good." Is it accident that he playfully puts himself into the place of God, of the creator of all?

I am writing these lines on Sunday, February 10, 1952. There was a Holland Festival Program on the radio this noon, and among symphonies a *Missa sine nomine* by Ockighem. The announcer made a funny slip calling the composition, *"Missa sine Domine."* Really Mahler's Eighth Symphony is such a Mass without God, or rather with the composer as Dominus. It is very likely that the belief in the omnipotence of his creative power and inspiration inflated Mahler's self-confidence to such an extent that the comparison with the Creator of Heaven and Earth spontaneously came into his thoughts.

As a second indication or trace of the cryptomnesia, I have already mentioned that Mahler had the idea that at a certain passage an orchestral interlude was necessary, although he himself felt a reluctance against that insertion and later on discovered that here a certain group of verses was missing in the old church-book from which he had taken the text of the *Veni*. Then that orchestral part covered exactly those verses which were not in the version of the missal available to him. I assume that the secret memory of that Goethe translation had been preserved (perhaps there was even the Latin text in Mahler's edition of that Goethe volume) and had given the composer the feeling that something was missing, a feel-

ing which remained unconscious and was expressed in the need to insert a longer orchestral interlude. When he then received the original text, the added verses fitted so precisely into that already composed part that no bar had to be taken away or to be added.

But the main circumstantial evidence in a psychological sense is the coupling together of that church hymn and of the final scene of *Faust*—a most striking and astonishing combination. The two parts of the symphony, thus the commentators and biographers declare, are related to each other as a claim is to an answer, an appeal to the decision. There is a paper by Bruno Walter, "Mahler's Road," in which Walter reports about this time:[21] "He continued to seek for his God . . . that was the desire of his soul as it was the mainspring of Faust's striving. . . . With unparalleled elementary ardor Mahler threw himself into the composition of those words. What was closer to him than that men had to claim, plead, demand thus? And what delight it was to him that there was such an answer as Goethe's message! He could not tell me enough of what happiness it gave him to surrender entirely to those words of Goethe's and to be able to absorb them so profoundly."

Contrast this report with the commentaries of a music historian, Paul Bekker, who discusses the two texts Mahler used: "The invocation of the Holy Ghost, of the creative primal power of love, was for Mahler the first theme, firmly conceived in his mind. From this premise a clear perception of the main idea resulted. The problem on which the success of the work depended was to secure a complement to this text. Mahler must have brooded over the supplement a long time before he devised the project, as daring as it was odd, to use the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*."[22]

I don't believe for a moment that the process in Mahler's mind was anything like that. The idea of uniting the fragment of *Faust* as the second part with the Latin church hymn was not a result of profound meditation and long brooding. It was an inspiration, a suddenly emerging idea, and just this fact explains its odd and astonishing character. The explanation which Mahler himself and his commentators and biographers gave, namely, that the invocation of the creative power has an answer and a fulfillment in the Eternal Feminine which draws man above, has all characteristics of a later,

21 Quoted in Richard Specht, *Gustav Mahler*, p. 255.
22 *Mahler's Symphonieen* (Munich, 1921), p. 273.

secondary interpretation screening a much more emotional connection. That philosophical, not to say metaphysical concept is a rationalization, an attempt at a reasonable or reasoned explanation of the result of a deeply rooted conflict and its mock-solution. In other words, long before the conception of the Eighth Symphony, Mahler was in his thoughts fervently occupied with the idea of the Holy Virgin as the representative figure of the Eternal Feminine which draws men above, that idea which had its sublimest expression in the final scene of *Faust*. As I shall point out later on, this idealization and sublime concept of woman led Mahler to a kind of Mary-complex and to a sexual withdrawal from his young wife. The creative drive of the composer and his sexual desire came in conflict with each other, and the ambition and ardor of production won. The figure of woman appeared to him then in this lofty presentation of the untouchable Mother of Heaven, as the personification of the idealized Eternal Feminine.

The fact that the final scene of Goethe's *Faust* has as its place the Heaven of Christianity, that here the great and legendary figures of Christian mythology appear, facilitates in Mahler's thoughts the bridge between this fragment and the hymn in which the creative spirit, the Holy Ghost, is invoked. The atmosphere of the Latin hymn of the Bishop of Mainz, Hrabanus Maurus, and that of the final scene of *Faust* are both filled with the fumes of incense, of adulation and worship. Love in the personification of the Holy Virgin, as in the Faust concept, emerges then as the purifying and freeing transfiguring power, the Eternal Feminine, as the answer to the highest tendencies of artistic creation. Such a philosophical connection was facilitated by a hidden factor. Mahler was led on this way not only by the similarity of the atmosphere. There was an invisible guide which directed his way from the church hymn to the final scene of *Faust*, and here is the last psychological indication for the daring assumption and the last bit of circumstantial evidence in this piece of analytic detective work: Mahler's way from the hymn to *Faust* was paved by the forgotten, but unconsciously remembered, fact that he had read Goethe's translation of that hymn and the poet's appraisal of it as an appeal to the genius of mankind.

CHAPTER XXIII

Freud and Mahler

ONE

THE CONNECTING LINK in Mahler's unconscious thought between the church hymn and the final scene of Goethe's *Faust* was the forgotten translation of that appeal in one of the Goethe volumes which he read almost daily in his last years. But deep down in the dark area of the repressed there was a secret underground which invisibly supported the proud and lofty bridge erected in his philosophical thoughts.

In a letter to his wife in June, 1909,[1] Mahler points out that the element "which draws us by its mystic force, what every created thing . . . feels with absolute certainty as the center of its being—what Goethe here—again employing an image he calls the Eternal Feminine, that is to say, the resting place, the goal, in opposition to the driving and struggling toward the goal (the Eternal Masculine) —you are quite right in calling the force of love. . . ." Goethe "presents and expresses it with growing clarity and certainty right on to the Mater Gloriosa, the personification of the Eternal Feminine."

The man who wrote these lines to his young wife had in his naïve egocentric attitude no inkling of a notion that such a lofty, idealizing concept of the Eternal Feminine went hand in hand with a monstrous neglect of his spouse. More than this, such worship of the Eternal Feminine prevented him from approaching his young wife

[1] Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler*, pp. 258 f.

in the flesh. A great crisis in his married life was needed to show him that he "in his fanatical concentration had simply overlooked me." These lines are from a book of memories which Alma Maria, Mahler's widow, published in 1940.[2] She reports there with admirable sincerity, unsparing of herself and her late husband, how the emergency situation in their married life came about: "I had longed for his love year after year. . . . My boundless love had lost by degrees some of its strength and warmth. . . . I knew that my marriage and my own life were utterly unfulfilled."

There was a heart-to-heart talk between Mahler and his wife, and when she was ready—at last—to tell him all, "he felt for the first time that something is owed to the person with whom one's life is linked. He suddenly felt a sense of guilt."

The crisis which had been lingering for several years came to an explosive expression when Mahler accidentally read a letter a young painter, in love with Alma Maria, had written to her. In this letter, the artist, whose flattering attentions had brought the young woman's submerged self-confidence to the surface again, spoke of his love and asked Alma Maria to leave Mahler and to go to him. Although the letter was distinctly meant for her, the envelope was very distinctly addressed to Director Mahler—very likely because it was the artist's unconscious wish that the letter should come to Mahler's hands. The composer opened it and asked in a choking voice, "What is this?" He was convinced that the address was deliberate and that the painter was asking him for Alma Maria's hand in marriage. The latent conflict that was felt for so long in the life of the couple was now discussed at length and with "utmost sincerity" on both sides. Mahler was stirred to his depths by tenderness and passion for Alma. Now he became jealous of everybody and everything.

Realizing that he had lived the life of a neurotic, he suddenly decided to see Sigmund Freud, who at this time was on his vacation in Leyden, Holland. To him he described his peculiar emotional states, doubts and conflicts. After his confession Freud reproached him frankly, saying, "But dared a man in your state ask a young woman to be tied to him?" At the end of their long psychoanalytic session Freud said, "I know your wife. She loved her father and can only choose and love a man of his sort." Freud assured Mahler that his age, of which the composer was so much afraid, was just what

[2] *Gustav Mahler, Erinnerungen und Briefe* (Amsterdam, 1940).

made him so attractive to his young wife. The analyst encouraged Mahler and told him that he unconsciously looked for a type like his own mother in every woman. Mahler's mother was suffering and grieved, and he unconsciously wished his wife to be the same.

Mrs. Mahler stated in her book of memoirs that Freud was correct in both cases. The mother of the composer was called Marie. Mahler wanted to change the name of his bride, who was called Alma, to Marie, although he could not pronounce the "r" very well. And, as he got further acquainted with his wife, he wished she might look more "stricken," as he said, in unconscious memory of the grieved face of his mother. His mother-in-law, who listened to him complain that his bride had so few sad experiences, answered justly, "Don't worry—that will come." But Mrs. Mahler herself recognizes, too, that she had always searched for a small man, who was wise and intellectually her superior, fashioned thus in the image of the father she had loved.

The hours Mahler spent with Freud and the analytic insights obtained in that long session had a deep and lasting effect on the composer. They removed his doubts and inhibitions, restored his capability for love and strengthened his self-confidence. His letters from this time on expressed his tenderness and passionate affection for Alma Maria. Between the lines of the sketch for the score of his Tenth Symphony, on which he was then working, there are personal phrases and outbursts, addressed to her—full of love, regret and despair, the deeper felt as he knew his end was near. Not only passages in letters, but also a poem, which he wrote on the train bringing him back from Leyden, prove the emotional effect of the long conversation with Freud. The first lines of this poem might be translated thus:[3]

They melt, the shadows of the night.
What always tortured me as fright,
Is blown away by power of one word.
My feeling, pressing to the height,
My thoughts, in danger of the glide,
They flow together into one accord:
I love you . . .

[3] My translation. Compare the original in German in Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler* (1946), p. 269.

Let me add at this point that there is another echo of that long conversation in Mahler's production. In the last song of the cycle *Lied von der Erde,* "The Farewell," are four lines which are not by Mong Kao-Jen and Wang Wei, the Chinese poets of the eighth century, but are by Mahler himself:

Alle Sehnsuchtwill nun träumen,
Die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,
Um im Schlaf vergess'nes Glück
Und Jugend zu lernen.

All longing goes a-dreaming,
Weary humanity is homeward bound,
To recapture in sleep
Forgotten fortune, youth.

These lines reveal the influence of Freud's theory about the dream.

I am in the fortunate situation of being able to complete the report of the meeting of the composer and the psychoanalyst from a letter of Freud's concerning it. When I lived in Holland in 1934, I discovered that Mahler had consulted Freud in this country in 1910. I was then, as in the last years, eager to collect biographical material about Mahler because I planned to write a psychoanalytic study about the obsessional trends of his personality.[4] I wrote Freud and asked him about his meeting with Mahler which had taken place about twenty-five years before in Holland. Here is Freud's answering letter, which is of great interest to the biographers of both men as well as to psychoanalysts:

Dear Doctor: Thanks for your New Year's letter which at last brought the news so long expected by me, that you have settled down in the foreign country, are entering into good social connections and earning what you need. Some stability and security seem to be a requirement for our difficult work. I count upon it that you will still present us with valuable achievements of the same caliber as your first studies.

I analyzed Mahler for an afternoon in the year 1912 (or 1913?) in Leyden. If I may believe reports, I achieved much with him at

[4] Mrs. Mahler's book of memories was published five years later (1940).

that time. This visit appeared necessary to him, because his wife at the time rebelled against the fact that he withdrew his libido from her. In highly interesting expeditions through his life history, we discovered his personal conditions for love, especially his Holy Mary complex (mother fixation). I had plenty of opportunity to admire the capability for psychological understanding of this man of genius. No light fell at the time on the symptomatic façade of his obsessional neurosis. It was as if you would dig a single shaft through a mysterious building.

Hoping to hear good news from you, with cordial wishes for 1935.

Yours, Freud.

4. 1. 1935

Prof. Dr. Freud

Lieber Herr Doktor

Dank für Ihren Neujahrsbrief, der endlich die Nachricht bringt, die ich solange erwarte, dass Sie sich in der Fremde einbürgern, gute Beziehungen anknüpfen und erwerben, was Sie brauchen. Ein Stück Stetigkeit und Sicherheit scheint doch die Bedingung unserer schweren Arbeit zu sein. Ich rechne darauf, dass Sie uns noch wertvolle Leistungen vom Range Ihrer ersten Studien schenken werden. Ich habe Mahler in Jahre 1912 (oder 13?) einen Nachmittag lang in Leiden analysiert, und wenn ich den Berichten glauben darf, viel bei ihm ausgerichtet. Sein Besuch erschien ihm notwendig, weil seine Frau sich damals gegen die Abwendung seiner Libido von ihr auflehnte. Wir haben in höchst interessanten Streifzügen durch sein Leben seine Liebesbedingungen, insbesondere seinen Marienkomplex (Mutterbindung) aufgedeckt; ich hatte Anlass die geniale Verständnisfähigkeit des Mannes zu bewundern. Auf die symptomatische Fassade seiner Zwangsneurose fiel kein Licht. Es war wie man einen einzigen tiefen Schacht durch ein rätselhaftes Bauwerk graben würde. In der Hoffnung, noch oft Gutes von Ihnen zu hören, mit herzlichen Wünschen für 1935

Ihr Freud

The date Freud gives here is, of course, erroneous. Mahler died on May 18, 1911. My researches allow me to fix the date of the meeting in Leyden as August 26 or 27, 1910.

Let me briefly comment on tbe content of Freud's letter. It bears testimony that Freud recognized and highly appreciated the genius

of Mahler. The run of the members of our psychoanalytic profession will, of course, shake their heads about the entirely "unorthodox" way of having a single psychoanalytic session which lasts a whole afternoon, but extraordinary situations and circumstances (as well as extraordinary personalities) demand extraordinary measures.

TWO

For the context into which we put this analytic fragment of the composer's biography it is important that here the last and most important psychological link between the *Veni, Creator Spiritus* and the idea of the last *Faust* scene becomes recognizable. Here emerges from the darkness the secret substructure of the stilted arch which bridges the passionate artistic zeal with the sublime concept of the Eternal Feminine. At the bottom of that proud and lofty building we recognize the contours of a familiar emotional constellation: the invocation of the Holy Spirit, that pleading for creative power, finds its answer and reward in the appearance of the Mater Gloriosa, of the untouchable mother image. The zeal for highest achievement is followed by the redemption, by the grace of the Holy Virgin. In the storm to the heights of the Divine Father, that passionate request is met with a response of the mother in her most idealized shape. Freud realized that secret emotional connection between Mahler's striving for the highest achievement and his "Holy Mary complex," the infantile pattern behind the philosophical façade of the fifty-year-old artist.

In his passionate desire to reach the ideal, this man neglected to live as other men, did not allow himself to enjoy the present, his wife and his friends and shunned company and other pleasures. While he was lost in his work, life passed him by. "Others wear the theater out and take care of themselves, I take care of the theater and wear myself out," he once said. Thus he worked not only as director of the Opera, but also as conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra, thus he worked on his symphonies. He burned the candle at both ends. He sought for the hidden metaphysical truth behind and beyond the phenomena of this world, for the ideals. He never tired in his search after that transcendental and supernatural secret of the Absolute and did not recognize that the great secret of the transcendental, the miracle of the metaphysical, is that it does not exist.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Song of the Earth

ONE

IN A LETTER to his friend Dr. Arthur Seidl (dated February 17, 1897), the thirty-seven-year-old Mahler wrote: "How lonely would I have to feel and how hopeless would my striving appear to me, if I could not read in such 'signs and miracles' my future victory."[1] He did indeed interpret the many coincidences and fortunate minor events in his musical production and in everyday life as presage of success and good fortune. In such a conception he did not differ from obsessive patients who consider small accidental events as auguries, indications of the future. A patient of mine walking in Central Park in New York found a dime on the ground and interpreted this as a hint from destiny that he should buy certain shares that would bring him considerable profit. The power of one's own wishes appears in this obsessional concept to be confirmed and to obtain its sanction by signs which hint as to the future. Destiny, fate or other supernatural forces seem in this way to indicate to the individual what he can hope for and expect. Afraid of ridicule and often not so sure that these powers are friendly enough to function, the neurotic patients are reticent to admit their belief in the "signs and miracles," but psychoanalysis reveals that they tenaciously keep their superstitious convictions besides and in spite of rational considerations which deny them.

The last *abonnement-konzerte* before the end of the season of 1894

[1] *Gustav Mahler's Briefe* (Wien, 1924), p. 231.

was to be dedicated to Hans von Bülow who had just died. Richard Strauss was to direct that concert. He became ill at the last moment, and Mahler had to take his place. The young musician wrote then to his sister Justine "It is strange that someone always has to become ill to make it possible for me to conduct a symphony."[2]

This is a trivial sentence, but it has a psychological resonance because it reveals an otherwise hidden superstitious belief of the young man and allows us an insight into the interplay of the emotional forces within him. That resonance becomes very audible when one considers that statement in the light of the precedents and of future vicissitudes in Mahler's career. Superficially seen, that sentence sounds banal, because how else could a young, ambitious conductor hope to lead a concert than because of the illness of his predecessor? Granted that this would be one of the main causes of his having a chance to conduct—there are, of course, other causes, for instance, renunciation or dismissal of the conductor—Mahler's sentence indicates, however, that he believed that such replacement was not accidental, hut fateful or preordained, as if the illness of his predecessor were the only possible way that his wish to conduct a symphony concert could be fulfilled. It is not difficult to recognize in such a sentence the expression of a superstitious belief that he could reach a desired position only through the illness of a privileged or, until then, more successful rival. Only one step more is needed from here to the disavowed superstitious wish that this preferred man should become ill to make his place free for Mahler, and then to the impression that this wish had the power to direct the course of events. In other words, the illness of a rival provided the fulfillment of the ambitious wishes of the young conductor and seemed to confirm the concealed belief that his thoughts were responsible for the removal of his predecessor.

In a previous chapter we mentioned that the admired and unconsciously envied and hated Hans von Bülow often seemed ready to yield his conductor's position to Mahler when he felt ill, but that he suddenly became all right again and thus frustrated Mahler's hopes. Finally a serious illness forced him to quit and leave his desk to Mahler who became permanent leader of the Hamburg Orchestra after Bülow's death. It seems that Mahler had waited and hoped for

2 Quoted from an article "Gustav Mahler and Hans von Bülow" by Alfred Rose, *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* (Sept. 17, 1929).

this moment a long time, and perhaps wished to have this position and to replace the maestro before he came to Hamburg.

Oddly enough, Mahler's career before the time in Hamburg was to a great extent determined by the sudden illness of his predecessors. Here are a few examples: He owed his early position as conductor in Olmütz to the death of the old conductor of the theater there. Since 1886 Mahler had functioned as second conductor in Leipzig. Arthur Nikisch was first conductor and treated the younger man rather coolly, "whether from vanity or from mistrust, I don't know," wrote Mahler then, "but let it suffice that we passed each other wordlessly." In February, 1887, Mahler wrote to his friend Fritz Löhr: "I conducted the *Walküre* (because of the sudden illness of my colleague) and in this way acquired a strong position for myself." Mahler was now compelled to do the work of two for several months, but he was satisfied with it in spite of the great burden, because he was first and this was what he wanted. He could not stand being the second; he had to be at least equal in his position. "Through the last turn of circumstances I am in every manner equal to Nikisch and can quite calmly compete with him about the hegemony which must be allotted to me already on account of my physical superiority. I believe that Nikisch will not put up with me and will leave sooner or later." It happened as he had foreseen, but Mahler himself left Leipzig in the next season.

There followed an anxious time of waiting for him. No engagement, and the old financial misery and worries as to how to support his parents and sisters. Then Alexander Erkel, the director of the Royal Opera in Budapest, became ill. His position was already shaken, and Mahler was nominated director in his place. We have already discussed the fateful time in Hamburg and Mahler's relationship with Bülow. Mahler was obsessed by the idea of becoming director of the Vienna Opera, a position which presented to him the highest summit of his ambition. When he resigned his position in Hamburg, Wilhelm Jahn, who had been director of the Vienna Opera for seventeen years, had been ill and hoped to ease his burden of work by the engagement of a new conductor. Mahler became assistant director in a short time. He visited Wilhelm Jahn during his vacations, and, later on, said to a friend about Jahn: "The poor man has no inkling of a notion that I shall be made his successor in a short time. I have to say that I feel very sorry for him; but what's the

use? If it were not I, it would be another and thus I prefer it being me."[3]

After his visit to Jahn during the summer of 1897, Mahler wrote in a letter to a friend, Mrs. Rosa Papier: "Jahn is not healthy, so that I (I have to confess it to you) almost felt remorseful, because I have to shorten and worry the little of life still allotted to him." But this time also, as he states, he consoles himself: If it were not he, it would be another. Jahn became incapacitated through an eye disease and was unable to read a score, etc., and Mahler became his successor. As director of the Opera he led the Royal Theatre to a phase of incomparable glamor and artistic achievement.

The same theme of the illness of the rival who has at the end to cede his place to Mahler reappears with variations in the case of Hans Richter, who was the favored conductor of the Vienna Opera when Mahler was made its assistant director. Mahler wrote the old master a very amiable, even submissive letter, and Richter answered in guarded and cool words which annoyed Mahler. Mahler's incomparable precision and overconscientiousness came in conflict with Richter's routine, and it soon became obvious that there was not enough room in the same theater for two artists of such marked and different personality. Richter complained about pains in his arm which handicapped him as conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra, and Mahler took his place there as well as at the desk of the Vienna Opera. Richter asked for his dismissal and Mahler helped him to get it. In a conversation with a friend, Ludwig Karpath, Mahler frankly expressed his feelings about Richter's retirement which became, of course, the topic of gossip in Viennese musical circles, which at the time meant in all Vienna. "I don't deny," said Mahler, "that I pushed him out, but it was not my evil wish that it came like that, but my work, my successful work. I would not have succeeded in shaking Richter's throne here, had he taken the trouble to direct the works of Wagner in a blameless manner. In this sense I really supplanted Richter, but that was not my merit, but his guilt." No doubt a very clumsy and not too logical attempt at self-justification. Mahler conducted the famous Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, which Richter had led for a quarter of a century, for the first time on November 6, 1898. He had again won a position he had desired for many years, and again the illness of a rival had paved his way to get rid of the older colleague.

[3] Ludwig Karpath, *Begegnung mit dem Genius* (1934), p. 57. Also the following passages from letters are quoted from this book.

Then, as before, Mahler secretly conceived of the illness as if the rival had become ill by the power of his wish to take the coveted place. This wish was certainly conscious, but the belief in its mental power remained unconscious and revealed a kind of astonishment mixed with satisfaction, as in that remark: "It is strange that someone always has to become ill to make it possible for me to conduct a symphony." Mahler did not hesitate a second to take the place vacated by his rival's illness. There was no conscious guilt feeling present in him—even regret about the colleague's illness was rarely expressed—but instead of it we recognize that self-consuming, one would almost say suicidal, zeal for work. Behind all that noisy and tumultuous drive there was, invisibly, a fear for himself, behind the eternal movement and turmoil there waited the threat of the great silence.

"Vita fugax" ("Life is transient"), Mahler used to quote. He was unconsciously afraid that his end was not so far away. Destiny seemed to pave his way, his rivals became ill or died and left their places to him until he became director of the Vienna Opera, unrestricted in his power, and conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra. God smiled at him, but Mahler was afraid that He soon could frown on him. His ways are dark.

In 1907 he left Vienna and went to New York, where he conducted in the Metropolitan Opera House and soon his own concert orchestra. The concert master, whom Mahler admired, reported a conversation with him. Theodore Spiering had told Mahler that he planned to dedicate himself to conducting after he had fulfilled his obligations as a violinist in the orchestra. Mahler half-jokingly remarked, "Well, I have to become ill in order to give you the opportunity."[4] The old superstition, the unconscious belief in the magical power of wishes, had been maintained, but now it took the form of fear of retribution. Mahler himself, he thought, would be the victim of those competitive and evil wishes of others against him.

Already chilly from fever, he conducted his last concert in New York on February 21, 1911. Then came the trip over the ocean, back to his beloved Vienna, and there the journey's end.

[4] Theodore Spiering, "Zwei Jahre mit Gustav Mahler in New York," *Vossische Zeitung* (May 11, 1911).

TWO

In 1907 both of Mahler's daughters had scarlet fever. The younger girl recovered, but it was then that the older one died. We know that Mahler suffered very much from the loss of his beloved child. So did his wife. The doctor came to examine Mrs. Mahler, for whom he ordered a complete rest because her heart seemed to he affected. Mahler said, rather jokingly, to the doctor, "Come along, wouldn't you like to examine me, too?" Dr. Blumenthal did so. Mahler was lying on the sofa, and the doctor had been kneeling beside him. He got up looking very serious, and casually said, "Well, you've no cause to be proud of a heart like that." Mrs. Mahler, who reports the scene, adds the sentence, "His verdict marked the beginning of the end of Mahler."[5] A Viennese specialist confirmed the fatal diagnosis of the general practitioner.

The couple fled their summer place in Maiernigg where the child had died, and which was now haunted by so many painful memories, and spent the rest of that summer at Schluderbach in the Tyrol. In long and lonely walks Mahler made the first sketch of those songs for orchestra which were brought into their final shape a year later as *Das Lied von der Erde.* The composer filled those songs with all the grief and anxiety he then experienced. He worked on the songs, and the work originally conceived of as isolated songs took the form of a symphony. The summer 1908 was full of grief. Stirred to the depth hy the death of his child and worried about his own bad health, Mahler could not be diverted. The only thing in which he found peace of mind and satisfaction was work on the *Lied von der Erde* and on his Ninth Symphony.

Here is the place to mention another of the composer's superstitious beliefs. He was afraid at the thought of a Ninth Symphony. The fact that Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner had died after having reached the number nine in their symphonic works made this number a menace. He knew that his heart illness was serious and he foresaw that he would not live long. He shuddered at the thought that no great writer of symphonies got beyond his ninth. He first called this new symphony his ninth, but then he erased this number and called it *Das Lied von der Erde.* When later he was composing his next symphony, he said to his wife, "Actually it is, of course, the

[5] *Gustav Mahler* (New York, 1946), p. 110.

Tenth, because *Das Lied von der Erde* was really the Ninth." When he was composing the Tenth Symphony, he remarked to her, "Now the danger is past." It was not. Mahler did not live to see *Das Lied von der Erde,* his Ninth Symphony, performed. He died after he had finished the symphony he had called the Ninth. Only two movements of the Tenth Symphony are completed. He had tried to outwit God in this numbering, and God had accepted the joke, but when it went beyond the limitations put to it, it was abruptly broken off. At the end the joke was on Mahler.

The number nine seemed to have confirmed his superstitious helief. Richard Specht remembered that an echo of that magical fear was still audible when Mahler worked on his Ninth Symphony. He said then, speaking of this new work and thinking of Beethoven's Ninth, "And it is also in D," but he added in an attempt at self-consolation, "but at least in major."

Arnold Schönberg had said in his beautiful *Rede über Gustav Mahler* (1913): "It seems that the Ninth is the limit. He who wants to go beyond it has to leave. . . . Those who had written a Ninth Symphony were too close to the Beyond."

We as psychologists are not concerned with the metaphysical problems which occupied Schönberg's thoughts, but with the emotional situation from which that superstitious belief in the mystical and fateful number springs. It is obvious that Mahler compared his own symphonic works with those of the masters with whom he felt a special psyclical affinity, with Beethoven, Schubert and Bruckner. The wish to match the masters of classical symphony was intensively felt, and this ardent desire to reach the greatness of those father-representative figures was accompanied by the unconscious fear of the price that must be paid by one who has such high aspirations. That fear expressed itself in the superstitious belief that he would have to die as soon as he had finished his Ninth Symphony, as the masters had died after having achieved so much. That fateful sequence in thought is really a consequence. It reveals the unconscious idea of retribution for an ambitious wish. The analyst will recognize in that fear a late offspring of the emotional reaction the boy felt at the wish to remove his father and to take his place, a reaction to an instinctive drive which was conceived of as outrageous and sacrilegious and which was followed by the unconscious fear of punishment and impending calamity. Beethoven, Schubert, Bruck-

ner had, in Mahler's thoughts, taken the place of the admired and envied father-figure of the boy and had inherited the emotions, once felt toward the powerful father of childhood. The recognition of his heart disease gave Mahler's fear a reality basis which provided the resonance to his superstitious fear.

After that conversation with Freud, Mahler was stirred to his emotional depth by the understanding of how much he had neglected his young wife and how much he had missed in life. Mrs. Mahler reports how intensive were the composer's guilt feelings, his new tenderness for her and his wish to make amends after his analysis with Freud. Mahler wrote poems to her daily and telegraphed them when he was absent. Every room at the hotel in Munich where he awaited her was smothered in roses in her honor. He heaped attentions upon her, wanted her always near him, was worried about her future and said farewell to her many times in most affectionate terms. After he fell in coma he cried out, "My Almschi!" hundreds of times. The end was near. The composer was given oxygen and lay with dazed eyes; one finger was conducting on the quilt. A smile was on his lips and twice he said, "Mozart darling" before his last breath.

Mrs. Mahler reports that her husband was filled with remorse and a hunger for life in that last year. He promised her that they would change their way of living, would take extensive trips to Egypt and the East, would enjoy life together and forget about duty and work, if he should recover. It was in these days that, filled with regret, he often said, "I have lived wrongly." What a beautiful and genuine sentence of profound insight!

What man after having passed fifty has not thought and felt the same way when he looked back on his life? Which man has not regretted that he has run and driven himself in this nonstop life, has hunted after shadows instead of enjoying himself and the moment? No other remorse is as burningly painful as that for occasions missed, of enjoyment of life passed by when the time runs out.

Driven by demoniac powers which demanded perfection and highest achievement, haunted by an inner urge which exacted the greatest, even the impossible for him, Mahler let life slip by him. In the summer of 1908, after the doctor had told him about his heart disease, he wrote to Bruno Walter that he had made a strange self-observation: "I cannot do anything but work, I have unlearned all other things in the course of the years. I feel like a morphine addict or a drinker to whom his vice is suddenly forbidden."[6] But later, after he had recognized that he had not gained, but lost his life in that self-destructive, never-ceasing zeal for work, he looks back. The *Lied von der Erde* praises the kingdom which is of this world. The first movement of the Ninth Symphony—in my feeling the most precious composition of Mahler—is not of this world any more. This movement is a wonderful symphonic *Kindertotenlied* for himself. A man who is dying says farewell to the beautiful life that has passed him by—when he knows it is too late. Between the lines of the Tenth Symphony, which is unfinished, there are short sentences, outcries, passionate interjections. On page 3: "O God! O God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" On the title page of the Scherzo: "The Devil leads me in a dance" and:

> Madness seizes me, Accursed!
> Demolish me that I may forget my being!
> That I may cease to exist . . .

and at the end of this movement (completely muffled drum): "None but you know what it signifies." At the end of the sketch of the finale: "To live for thee! To die for thee! Almschi!"

The outcries and exclamations of the Tenth Symphony come from the same deep well as the *Song of Lazarus* which a great poet wrote when he was slowly dying in his mattress grave in Paris about one hundred years ago. As in Mahler's last compositions, desperate hunger for life and utter weariness, the wish to lose one's consciousness and the last clarity, fight one another. As in that remark of Mahler's, "I have lived wrongly," Heinrich Heine, looking back on his life, contrasted the burning ambition and the creative urge that made him restless, with regret about a wasted life and with a desperate desire for all the pleasures of this earth. With the candor given by the approach of the end, and contemptuously brushing aside all conventional phrases, he jotted down his "Epilogue" whose first lines proclaim:

> "Our frozen graves are warmed by fame"?
> Asinine saying! Stupid nonsense!
> Better the warmth provided by a milkmaid
> Who kisses you soundly with full lips
> And smells considerably of manure.

6 *Briefe*, p. 408.

CHAPTER XXV

Last Movement

ONE

THIS PRESENTATION of the analytic investigation has here reached a point where I, reluctantly enough, have again to return to the psychological discussion of my own problems. The question of what was the nature of the block that prevented me for so many years from writing the study on Mahler for which all the material was prepared had, of course, emerged often enough in my thoughts. The answer in a general sense was clear—it must have been some unconscious fear, an obsessive anxiety or an unknown superstition that blocked the way. I never tried to find out about the content of this fear by a systematic manner of self-analysis, but was content when some fleeting thoughts seemed to indicate that some day the inhibition would vanish and I would be able to write that book planned for so many years.

The solution of that problem did not come suddenly, as I hoped, but slowly, in long intervals, piecemeal and always in connection with some insight into Mahler's life. The way to this solution was paved when one day the question occurred to me as to why this composer had exerted such a fascination upon me, a fascination whose nature was a mixture of attraction and repulsion. What had I in common with him? Why should I have such an intensive interest in his life and work? There was, as far as I could see, very little in common between us. I never thought that I had any musical talent

and certainly no composer's gift. I could not even read a score. There was never a time when I felt the wish to be director of a theater or to conduct an orchestra. As far as I could judge, I possessed none of the distinct qualities and marked personal traits I had recognized in my study of Mahler. There is nothing of a genius in me. There was, of course, not the slightest physical resemblance between him and me. I searched in vain for traits we had in common. There were really only three things of a very general character which could be compared. I was very ambitious, as he had been, I had marked obsessive traits and I was a Jew as he was. Well, these traits he shared not only with me, but with a few million people. I could not claim that I had a special affinity with his personality. Even his music was not always congenial to me. It was, it is true, sometimes as if the voice which sounded in his music had for me a very personal appeal, as if it were given to him to express emotions I had deeply felt in a manner no other composer could. At other times a movement of one of his symphonies was felt as entirely alien and as remote from my sphere of emotions as Sirius is from our planet.

While I once reflected on those three general characteristics, only the presence of obsessive traits rang a bell in my mind: it brought the memory of the haunting melody back to mind. The other two features did not have a similar effect, but something like a faint notion about them hovered in the wings of my thought without making its appearance on the scene. Being Jewish and being ambitious—these two features had something to do with my father, I did not know what.

The vague notion became clearer when I read an anecdote somewhere in the biographical material about Mahler. The father of Julius Tandler, who became a famous professor of anatomy at Vienna University, and Bernhard Mahler, the father of the composer, once took a walk together in Vienna. They passed the Anatomical Institute, and Mr. Tandler remarked, "My son is now a medical student, but he will some day be professor in this building." Ten minutes later the two men went by the Opera on the Ringstrasse, and Mr. Mahler pointed to that impressive house, saying, "My son is at present conductor at the provincial theater in Laibach, but he will one day be director of the Imperial Opera." For a moment, the face of my father, who belonged to the generation of these two men, emerged in my mind, to be submerged in the next moment. The

memory of him reappeared, however, a few weeks later when I read a passage in a letter which Mahler wrote to his friend, the singer Anna Bahr-Mildenburg, on June 25, 1896.[1] He expressed his sympathy with his friend who had lost her father a short time before and who often thought of the deceased. He had similar feelings, he said, whenever something beautiful or good happened to him. "It is too sad that just those who have the greatest interest in us rarely live long enough to see us accomplish what they wish. They walk a short stretch of the stony way with us, then have to leave us. We must consider ourselves fortunate when they can at least cast a glance at the beautiful goal. . . ."

When at this point the thought of my father re-emerged, I had to think with sadness and regret that I had often disappointed him during my school years. He died when I was eighteen years old and before I had any real opportunity to prove to him that I, too, could work hard and accomplish something. But along with memories of my boyhood, of the years between nine and twelve, the name of Mahler came to mind, and I knew all of a sudden why. My little sister had a piano teacher, Mrs. Sch— who frequently visited my parents with her husband. Mrs. Sch— accompanied Marie Renard, one of the most charming singers of the Opera, in her study of her new parts and could not tell my parents enough about the real Viennese gracefulness and healthy, warm personality of her pupil. Marie Renard still lives in the memory of the Opera habitués of that time as the enchanting personification of the typical Viennese *süsses Mädel* (sweet girl) with her rich and warm mezzo-soprano. Mrs. Sch— told my parents, too, of clashes of will Marie Renard had with the new director Gustav Mahler. Very soon the story of these early conflicts was followed by tales of admiration which the singer and her accompanist both had for the uncompromising artistic zeal and the iron will of Mahler, who reformed the opera and led it to a cultural era never reached before or since. Mahler demanded that each performance should be perfect, and his will and great intellect succeeded in transforming the opera scene from a "concert in costume," as he used to say, into unforgettable musical and dramatic presentations.

From those tales and stories of Mrs. Sch—, to which I listened in fascination as a boy of nine or ten, I received strong impressions

1 Mahler, *Briefe*, p. 147.

about the controversial figure of the new director. To the gossip of musical Vienna, which was intensively interested in and proud of its Imperial Opera, Mahler was a welcome subject. Each performance was discussed in detail, and each reform the unbending and fanatical will of Mahler enforced sharply criticized, but also reluctantly admired. His nervous, moody, sarcastic temperament that, entirely un-Viennese, did not appreciate "social connections," his reckless and ruthless severity, his "crazy tyranny" and "idealism" awakened the surprise and indignation of the Viennese. Rumors of how he ruined the best singers of the Opera, mistreated the members of the or chestra and trampled on the vanity and sensitiveness of the officials circulated and were eagerly reported by Mrs. Sch—, but also many of his witty sayings made the round. In the diaries which the opera singer Theodor Reichmann left, the intense emotions which the director awakened are well reflected: there are outbreaks of senseless rage against the "Jewish ape" who dared to correct and to discipline him and promises that he will slap his face at the next occasion, and after the performance almost ecstatic expressions of worship for Mahler as a half-god who brought the singer to an accomplishment he himself would not have thought possible. Mrs. Sch— was herself moved by such contradictory feelings toward Mahler whose "inhumanity" and "malicious enjoyment" of torturing orchestra and singers made him appear to me as the devil incarnate, but whose iron-strong energy and purity of idealism impressed me very much when Mrs. Sch— told my parents about his incomparable accomplishments as conductor.

I cannot decide any more which of the numerous anecdotes that are remembered hy me were heard when I listened as a boy to the tales of Mrs. Sch— or how many I learned in later years and how many I read in the newspapers and magazines. I am almost certain that I heard then that he ordered the singer Elizza to repeat many times the aria, "Die, you monster!" from the *Magic Flute*, and when finally, trembling with rage, she almost yelled it to him, he said smilingly, "That would suit you fine, wouldn't it, Miss Elizza?" I must have heard then that he received the Viennese reporters with the words, "No, I did not kill Theodor Reichmann."

The "Mahler legend," as it was then called, grew and grew. It emphasized his brutality and remorselessness, even his lasciviousness. When someone pointed out to him that the interests of the members

of the Imperial Court had a right to he considered, he answered, "Possible, but then I do not belong to this place." And he acted accordingly, with the seriousness and courage of his conviction. When the singer Mizzi Günther appeared for an audition in his office with a letter of recommendation from an Austrian archduke, he tore the letter to pieces and said, "Sing!" He refused to re-engage a singer in whom Franz Josef was interested and whose voice had lost its strength, and finally decided he would let her appear on the stage, if he could announce her name on the program with the parenthesis: "By command of the Kaiser."

He asserted his will against the bitter antagonism and resistance of the *gemütlichen* Viennese. He insisted that no one should he allowed to enter the opera audience after the curtain had risen—an unheard-of measure in the world of contemporary theater. An usher whom he severely reprimanded because he let a man enter the hall during the performance, and who defended himself saying the gentleman had pushed him aside, had no luck, because Mahler severely remarked, "The push the gentleman gave you had the form of a florin."

I know that it was at this time I heard the malicious name given to Mahler at the coffee houses of Vienna. The German language has the expression *Caesarenwahn*, meaning the form of insanity manifested by the late Roman emperors, drunk with their unrestricted power. The Mahler enemies, whose headquarters was the Caffee Imperial on the Ringstrasse, proclaimed that the conductor suffered from Caesurean insanity because he insisted on emphasizing caesuras in the compositions during the rehearsals with the orchestra. These and other stories, many bizarre and grotesque and most of them lies and exaggerations, were told by Mrs. Sch— to my parents on those evenings.

It is psychologically interesting that my memories were falsified by the influence of unconscious tendencies. Here is a significant instance: Mahler once ran into Hugo Wolf, whose friend he had been and who had also been a student at the Vienna conservatory. "What have you there?" asked Wolf, pointing to some sheets of written music. Mahler showed him a song he had composed, and Wolf reading the lied expressed vivid appreciation of the music. Mahler said, somewhat embarrassedly, "Yes, I think we are now up to Mendelssohn." I had the impression that I had heard this anec-

dote from Mrs. Sch– until I remembered that Friedrich Eckstein, the mathematician and pupil of Bruckner, had told me the little story. I had visited the old man who had known Mahler and had been one of his antagonists. I did not like him and did not relish his malicious remarks about Mahler. I remembered the visit after I read Eckstein's book *Alte unnennbare Tage* Wien, 1936, p. 113, in which he reports that anecdote.

Under the influence of Mrs. Sch–'s tales, I in my naïveté attributed more power and glory to Mahler than he had, and what I heard from her and my parents about the new director of the Opera transfigured him to a kind of martyr or hero. I must have admired the fanatic singleness of purpose and the obstinate energy of the man, and the interest in him could, oddly enough, coexist with that in Greek mythology and in the tales of "Leather-stocking" and *The Last of the Mohicans*. Like most of my contemporaries, I was unaware of Mahler as a composer, but knew his name only as that of a conductor and director of the Imperial Opera. I saw him the first time when I was thirteen years old at the desk of the conductor in the Opera, and I made acquaintance with his compositions many years later.

TWO

My father spoke of Mahler several times with much admiration. He emphasized that only a man of extraordinary will power could, as a Jew, have become director of the Opera. At this time anti-Semitism had reached its climax in Vienna, and it sounded almost incredible that a Jew (although baptized) could obtain such a high official position. Mahler himself was in an ambivalent attitude toward Judaism, but never disavowed his Jewish origin. As a young man, he had once been rejected by a theater on account of his "Jewish nose." A few years later, when his fame as conductor increased, this theater offered him the same position. He wired back that he could not accept it, adding, "Nose the same." My father's high appreciation of Mahler's achievements must have contributed a good deal to my admiration of the man. Even the fact that Mahler, a Jew, had reached such a high position impressed the boy who became more and more aware of the surging waves of anti-Semitism around him.

Psychoanalysis made us acquainted with an unconscious factor within the ego. We call it the ego-ideal, or, better, the superego. It is essentially the representative of the standard of the parents who superintended the individual's development in the first phase of his life. The new agency of the superego perpetuates the demands of the parents, is, so to speak, their monument within the ego. It is a frequent misinterpretation of Freud's concept when analysts think that the parents alone form the agency of the superego. Freud himself emphasized that their influence is not restricted to their personalities themselves, but comprises "also the racial, national and family traditions handed on through them as well as the demands of the immediate social milieu which they represent."[2] The superego in Freud's concept takes over in the course of the individual's development contributions "from later successors and substitutes of his parents, such as teachers, admired figures in public life, or high social ideals." Only a sound understanding of those intense influences which contributed so decisively to my development can explain why the figure of Mahler could make such an inroad into my emotional and intellectual life. "What had this composer, conductor and theater director to do with me?" I had often asked myself. There was no common ground between us. Yet there was this intense interest on my part in his personality and his work.

Those memories of Mrs. Sch– and her stories, of my early admiration for the reformer of the Vienna Opera, of the controversies about his figure, were, in the strict sense of the word, never forgotten. But they became actualized, revivified and meaningful–that is, their meaning for my development in those formative years between nine and thirteen became clear to me only after I had read that little anecdote about the fathers of Julius Tandler and Mahler. The pattern of these fathers' pride in and ambition for their sons brought back the memory of my own father and I realized, ashamed and regretful, that he, too, had been ambitious for me, that he had hoped that I would accomplish much in life. I became aware of how little I had fulfilled his aspirations. I had become ambitious myself after my father's death and had worked hard, as if in repentance for having disappointed him, but, alas, my talent and my ego strength did not match my aspirations. Nature had not endowed

[2] "An Outline of Psychoanalysis," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1940), Vol. XXI.

me as it had Mahler, that "man of genius," as Freud had called him in his letter to me, nor had it given me that singular energy and tenacity without which no man can accomplish great things in his life. That anecdote also made me understand what important contribution the conversations about Mahler had made to the formation of my superego. Here was a man of thirty-seven who had ascended to the high position of director of the Vienna Opera, had broken with all traditions and conventions and had achieved great things—and this man was a Jew. My father and mother, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Sch—, spoke with great respect, even enthusiasm of him, and the stories I heard about his unbending will and fanatic zeal elevated his figure in my imagination.

My interest in Mahler's work later on in life had thus an historical basis, for it was founded on those early impressions of my boyhood. The emotional aspect of my fascination with Mahler's figure is, of course, founded on the high esteem I had for the opinion of my father and on the unconscious effects his convictions had upon me as a boy. Without knowing it, I carried within myself the germs of certain ways he had of looking at life, of his *Weltanschauung*. He had admired and praised Mahler, and this artist whose field of work and interests were so alien to me had become an object of my preoccupation in thought. In the boy of ten or eleven there must have lived an unconscious wish likewise to accomplish much and to deserve such approval and high appreciation from his father. This wish had remained dormant through many years, and when it became conscious my father had passed away and could not even see that I worked hard and wanted to satisfy his ambition for me.

My father died in 1906. I heard Mahler's Second Symphony for the first time the next year, and it could not be accidental that that chorale with its expression of highest aspirations stirred me so deeply. As little accidental as the strange fact that this same chorale haunted me so many days after the death of Dr. Abraham. That final movement of the Second Symphony had more than the character of a musical composition. It was a "clear call for me."

THREE

The insight into the psychological meaning of those memories now lets me understand why I had the vague, hut lingering impression that there was some fateful connection between Mahler's life and my own, an impression which, based on the slightest foundation of facts, nevertheless accompanied me for many years. The impression was carefully disavowed and sometimes hidden from myself, but it often emerged surprisingly and at unexpected times. I had forgotten that odd superstitious notion when it suddenly sprang up again like a jack-in-a-box after having been pushed down. The impression was, of course, often brushed aside contemptuously or ridiculed when I became aware of it, but it lingered on, nevertheless, in the form of a vague or odd feeling.

One source of it was a combination of accidents which brought me to many cities in which Mahler had lived and worked. A psychoanalytic congress was held in Budapest where Mahler had been director of the Opera. World War I was responsible for my seeing Laibach where he had been conductor; private business or trips which became necessary brought me to Paris, London, Kassel, Prague, Hamburg, Olmütz and other cities where, as I knew, Mahler had lived. There were many unexpected occasions which made a journey to one of those cities necessary. I had, for instance, never been in Leipzig before when I was invited to speak there before a scientific society. I had never dreamed that I would see New York when, exiled by the Nazis, I came to the U. S. in my fiftieth year. Holland had been the scene of a Mahler cult where the composer himself and Mengelberg conducted his symphonies many times. It was a strange feeling, somewhat akin to astonishment, when I sat at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, listening to Mahler symphonies, and a similar reaction was felt when I visited the Metropolitan Opera and Carnegie Hall, where Mahler had conducted, and when I accidentally came into one of the hotels where he had lived when he was in New York in the years 1907 to 1911. The similarity of the social milieu in Vienna, of course, favored coincidences, and encounters with people whom Mahler had known, and I often found myself in situations that had some relation to his life.[3]

Needless to say that that superstitious impression was not weakened by the fact that there were many places and cities which Mahler had visited and where I never went, as, for instance, St. Petersburg,

[3] One of them was that my first wife had the same illness of which Mahler died, stayed in the same sanatorium as he and was treated by the same physician. Compare my book *Fragment Of A Great Confession* (New York, 1949).

Rome, Iglau. Certain circumstances brought about also a remote similarity in our manner of working. Mahler used the summer months for the conception and the first draft of his symphonies, while his duties and obligations as director and conductor made it impossible to do more than orchestrate and correct his draft during the season. He thus became what the Viennese called "a summer composer," since he tried to isolate his work of writing music from that other kind of artistic activity. In a similar manner, I attempted to reserve the summer and vacation time for writing my books, while the major part of the year had to be given to psychoanalytic practice. The unconscious purpose of this mechanism of isolation is to keep the two spheres separate from each other, but it is difficult to have a precise demarcation line as they overlap at certain points. I daydreamed of a future which would allow me to give up that insane running after the Dollar and to live only to write. In Mahler's letters many desperate passages express his impatience with the strict and overconscientiously kept routine to which he subjected himself.

Those trivial features, representative of several others, would not have been mentioned, if they had not provided a sounding board for the unconscious emotions whose effects were recognized much later. The experience of the haunting melody stands out in bold relief against the identification with Mahler's life and work. When Dr. Abraham died, I must have unconsciously compared my situation with that of the young composer Mahler after Bülow's death. That chorale with its message of ultimate triumph over the rival arose from the depth of the same emotions which the composer felt. The death of the superior and older master, who had been admired and envied, seemed, in both cases, to clear the way for the high aspirations of the pupil. The decease of the respected and hated rival seemed to provide Mahler with the final movement of the symphony which so incessantly resounded in me during those days on the Semmering.

At this point the comparison between Mahler and myself comes to a sudden end. After he had overcome a block of several weeks, the composer finished his symphony, using the chorale he had heard at the church service for the deceased Bülow. The death of Abraham had in an indirect way provided me with a scientific problem that awakened my psychological interest and curiosity: the problem of the haunting melody, and especially of that melody which had

haunted me in the weeks between Christmas and New Year's. In contrast with Mahler, I could not overcome the invisible block on the way to my goal. Mahler needed only a few months to bring his symphony into final shape. I needed more than a quarter of a century to overcome the unknown antagonist in myself, that undiscoverable enemy who did not allow me to finish an indifferent psychological study.

I have already mentioned that I had early recognized that the obstacle in my way was of the kind we know in psychoanalysis by the name of obsessive anxiety, but I did not know which anxiety prevented me from writing that study of the haunting melody. In other words, the presence and the effects of the anxiety were known to me, but I had no notion as to its content. I had different reactions to the unknown agency that prevented me from working on the book on Mahler I had planned. I was sometimes outraged at the thought that I was not master of my soul and had to bow to the forbidding power, sometimes I was ready to resign myself to the inhibition and to give up the writing of the study, and finally I decided to wait until the enemy should unmask himself. This waiting time was spent in writing a number of books which had nothing to do with Mahler and with the subject of the haunting melody[4] and in collecting biographical material for the projected study on the composer. This preparatory work of gathering material seemed never to come to an end—in the characteristic manner of compulsive-neurotic symptoms which use prolonged preparation for action as an excellent device not to do something they are afraid of. It is as if a man who wanted to see well were continuously to wipe his glasses instead of putting them on his nose. These preparations are measures of protection against imagined dangers and are, as in cases of washing compulsions, very tiring and often exhausting. A patient of mine spends almost the whole day busily cleaning and washing pots and plates for dinner which she unconsciously does not want to prepare for her husband. Compulsive patients often take incredible trouble and make exhausting efforts to avoid an hour of honest work.

[4] How right was Freud in stating that human beings are really unable to keep their thoughts secret! I had kept my friends in the dark about the plan to write a book on Mahler, but there is no book published by me since 1925 in which the name of this composer is not mentioned in some context.

There remained, however, the uncomfortable awareness of some unfinished business. It is difficult to remember exactly how and when it first dawned on me what the content of that obsessive anxiety was. Looking back, I am under the impression that it did not arise suddenly, but came in several pushes as if more than a single effort of the repressed material was needed to break through the wall of defense and to arrive at the light of day and of conscious perception. It is due rather to the accumulation of those powerful thrusts than to a single blow that the insight into the true nature of that anxiety and its roots arrived at the threshold of conscious thinking. I can only describe the succession of several impressions whose emotional effects must have contributed to this result, and I am not sure whether these mentioned here are all or only a part of the impressions responsible.

FOUR

The first impression, opening an avenue to the unconscious thought, came from my analytic practice. In the treatment of several patients, I became attentive as to how intimately some of their ambitions were connected in their thoughts with defenses of their ego. There was, for instance, that young violin virtuoso who could not succeed in playing the Beethoven concerto to his own satisfaction. It became clear in his analysis that he was unconsciously afraid to play the concerto before he reached the age at which Beethoven had composed it because he feared that his performance would show that he had not the emotional maturity, especially the depth of feeling, expressed in the second movement. Another patient postponed the writing of a novel, which he had sketched in the first draft, for several years because he was afraid that some calamity would befall him after he had finished it. Later on in our analytic work, we discovered that he brought the writing of his novel in associative connection with a certain work of another writer who had been killed in an accident after having completed a work of fiction which my patient admired. The writer's block was removed after he reached the age of that other author, or rather a year afterwards. It seems the superstitious fear or the magic belief in a danger connected with the completion of the novel receded after he had passed the year he considered "critical" in his obsessional thoughts.

Incredible as it may sound, I did not bring these and other cases into any associative connection with that unknown hindrance that stood in the way of my own work on the study of Mahler—a clear instance of the effects of the mechanism of isolation which separated my clinical work from my psychological research in another field.

The examples of my patients brought something else to mind, something from my boyhood I had almost forgotten in the last years; a connection I had made between age and achievement. I had then the habit of comparing the age at which the leading figures in the biographies I read had already achieved much with my own age and with my own frustrated aspirations. I still remember that I sometimes quoted in my sad thoughts a line from Schiller's *Don Carlos*. "Twenty-one years old and not yet having done anything for immortality." I am smiling at the memory of how ambitious I was when I was twenty-one, and how the waves of my aspirations have been reduced to an almost imperceptible ripple in the meantime of forty-four years. That habit of comparison with great men accompanied me for several years, and a trace of it must have continued to live, unknown to me, far into the years of mature manhood.

While the obsessional thoughts of my patients were not brought in conscious connection with any insight into my own obsessive inhibition, they at least cleared the way for its understanding. The second impression had its source in the study of Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*. That superstitious fear that made him shy away from writing a ninth symphony because Beethoven, Schubert and Bruckner had died after having finished the Ninth had a familiar ring for me. It sounded as if I must have similar thoughts and superstitions. . . . Mahler really died after he had finished his Ninth Symphony. . . . How old was he then? . . . He had passed fifty. . . . Dr. Abraham was fifty, too. . . .

I had come close enough at this point to the insight of my own neurotic fear—too close for comfort, as a matter of fact—but I did not get there yet for some time. The goal was reached on another detour. I once looked something up in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* and, searching for that passage, encountered another one which, although, of course, known to me, now gained a special and personal meaning. Freud interprets there[5] the "absurd" dream about

[5] "Die Traumdeutung," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 365 ff.

his dead father. In this dream numbers play a marked role, especially the number 1856, Freud's birth year, and 1851, which to the dreamer appeared not so different from the first. The dream thought as it appears in Freud's interpretation amounts to the self-confident question: "What are five years to me? That's no time; that need not be considered. I have plenty of time before me . . . and I shall achieve this in this time." Freud's dream gives the imagined answer to the reproach of a colleague that he needed so much time, years, for the completion of an analytic cure.

The following lines in Freud's book now attracted my special attention. The author there points out that the number 51 in the dream, separated from the century, is determined also in the opposite meaning and therefore appears several times in the dream. I quote: "Fifty-one is the age at which a man is especially endangered and at which I have seen colleagues suddenly die, among them one who had been nominated professor a few days before, after a long period of waiting." These lines made an odd impression upon me. They followed me and preoccupied me in the next days. I thought of some people who had died after having reached fifty and besides some relatives, Mahler occurred to me; and then Dr. Ferenczi and Dr. Abraham, whom I considered the two most prominent analysts following Freud, came to mind. They all died after having reached fifty-one years. (Not exactly correct. Abraham died before he was fifty years old, and Mahler shortly before his fifty-first birthday.) I finally came, on this long detour, to the conclusion that the mysterious, unconscious prohibition forbade me to write the book I had planned before I had reached that year. More correctly put—after having passed fifty-one years, because that unconscious fear seemed to indicate that I would die at this age as Mahler and Abraham had died.

The procedure by which I at last came to this result is certainly noteworthy. It would be easy enough to sacrifice truthfulness to the urge to show off one's analytic cleverness and efficiency, but the truth is that I never made any attempt at systematic self-analysis to discover and to remove the hidden obstacle which forbade me to work on that book.

It is remarkable that when the time was ripe, the insight into the origin and nature of my inhibition fell into my lap. I am sure the last push was given to the fruit by the emotional reaction to those

remarks in Freud's interpretation of his own dream. His statement that the fifty-first year was endangering many men awakened an echo in me. It not only reminded me of Mahler's, Ferenczi's and Abraham's deaths but also of the fact that Freud was approaching his fifties when he wrote those words.[6] I could not help thinking—and no psychoanalyst who had studied the interpretation of that dream can deny it—that a trace of a fear similar to mine must have been felt by Freud himself when that remark was written. It was this fact—you could say, the unconscious or at least unwanted confession of such a superstitious thought on the part of my beloved master—that gave me at last and so late the moral courage to penetrate to the concealed core of my obsessive fear and to understand what unknown motives were responsible for my own inhibition, which had now lasted several decades. As my analytic practice and my numerous books, written in the meantime, prove, there was nothing the matter with my zeal and ability to work. The prohibition of production was restricted to the writing of this single book.

But why? That was clear immediately to me when I thought of the number 51, the age at which Abraham had died. It was easy to reconstruct from the puzzle fragments at my disposal what must have taken place and what had caused the inhibition. After the arrival of the news of Abraham's death, there must have been a moment of satisfaction, even of triumph, as if the superior old rival had been removed and had cleared the way to my ambitions. The counterwave of affection and gratitude, of grief and remorse made me feel unconsciously guilty and produced a moral reaction that lasted such a long time. The effect was not what one would expect, the repression of that wicked satisfaction and of the whole scene in my memory, but an inhibition in the investigation and later on in the writing of the study on Mahler. This planned book would deal analytically with the emotions aroused by the death of my friend and master as it was unconsciously expressed in the emergence and reemergence of the haunting melody. Thus, neither the scene itself nor its emotional significance were blocked in their way to conscious thinking, but their scientific use as it would be presented in a self-analytic paper on their psychological meaning was forbidden by the power of conscience.

[6] The *Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900 when Freud was forty-four years old.

As the chorale expressed similar reactions of Mahler's after Bülow's death—the reader remembers that I compared my own experience of the haunting melody with Mahler's after the death of the maestro—it was also forbidden to deal with this subject in an analytic paper. Also here neither the content of my biographical research nor its analytic investigation and its result were forgotten, but instead of a repression there appeared an inhibition which prevented me from writing and publishing what I had found. In other words, my guilt feelings and my reactive mourning and affection for Dr. Abraham did not manifest themselves in keeping the content of the experience from my conscious thoughts, as it happens in neurotic cases, but in a secret prohibition to use them for the purpose of scientific presentation. As the punishment must fit the crime, the deed I had committed in my thoughts was to use the experience after Abraham's death and the experience of Mahler after Bülow's death for analytic publication and—followed to the consequences in my imagination—for becoming famous, as famous as Abraham had been as an analyst by this very book.

As silly as it now sounds, I must have grotesquely exaggerated the importance and significance of that study in my daydreams and must have attributed a singular place to it in analytic literature. Otherwise, how could I have imagined that an indifferent psychoanalytic contribution would make me famous with one blow? Such a wild exaggeration was, of course, not to be explained by an error in judgment, but by the interference of my hidden emotions with intellectual processes. Sound judgment is distorted and poisoned by such concealed emotions, as is best seen in our political and religious beliefs. The great significance I attributed to the study on Mahler arises from my emotional involvement in the subject.

I could write neither my own experience, or rather its analysis, nor that of Mahler. Did not that chorale, proclaiming the ultimate victory and highest achievement of the composer, occur to me during my thoughts about Abraham? And had it not haunted me for several days with greatest tenacity as if those stanzas and their music would remind me of my own aspirations and their realization? It was forbidden to harvest the fruit which had grown in that hour of my thoughts about Abraham because those thoughts themselves had been hostile to and triumphant over a beloved and admired man who had been my benefactor and friend. In other words, my punishment

for the thought crime should be full renunciation of the scientific use of an idea that had occurred in connection with Abraham's death, more than this, whose emotional premise was the triumph over him at the occasion of his death. It was not only comparable to trampling over bodies, but to killing an admired man and a friend and then walking over his body to your destination. There was no doubt that I considered myself unconsciously responsible for the death of Abraham as if my secret wish had killed him. The scientific use of my analytic investigation of the composition of Mahler's Second Symphony was forbidden not only on account of the similar emotions of the composer after Bülow's death—so to speak, on account of the psychological neighborhood of my own experience—but also because that chorale had been the sounding instrument of the same triumphant and unconsciously hostile tendencies toward his teacher. It had given voice to the mute emotions in myself in that hour of thinking of Abraham, a voice which not only sounded, but resounded in me and could not be silenced.

To make the psychological significance of my inhibitions very clear, a comparison easily comes to mind: if Mahler had recanted using that chorale which he heard at the church; that is, if, instead of using it for the finale of his Second Symphony, he had always thought of using it but for twenty-seven years had not been able to complete the symphony because it was connected with the death of the admired maestro and gave expression to the triumph over him. This comparison will also show with what energy Mahler conquered similar feelings of guilt and that his singleness of purpose outweighed all other considerations. After he had that inspiration of the chorale, not only did he concentrate on the work of the finale, but he finished it (after a short period of inability to work, indicating that he felt an inner conflict) in a few months. The contrast of Mahler's behavior and my own attitude to the idea of the analytic study is conspicuous. The concentration was there, but so was the inhibition. The next twenty-five years carried the injunction: Always think of that book, never work on it.

The discovery of the motives at the roots of my writer's block came as such a surprise to me that I suspect that I have always unconsciously known what the inhibition was. Such concealed preknowledge—carefully concealed from myself—together with my analytic training enabled me to recognize that the avoidance of writ-

ing the Mahler study was founded on a superstition, namely, that I would die when I had finished it. The analytic interpretation of this obsessive fear is obvious: I would die as punishment for the death wish against Abraham (or rather for that moment of satisfaction and triumph when I received the news of his death). More explicitly said, I would die because I welcomed and used the idea emerging in connection with his death for a book that would make me famous and enable me to take the place vacated by his death. At each attempt at beginning the writing of the book, that unconscious anxiety emerged and prevented me from working. The magical thought, expressed in the anxiety, was, so to speak, the fortress that protected me and my life in keeping me away from an action forbidden by inner powers. All this certainly sounds odd, but this was the emotional process: my inactivity had the unconscious purpose of avoiding the magical danger situation and the anxiety aroused by it. He who keeps away from a dangerous place need not be afraid of the risk.

The almost incredible tenacity of an obsessional thought does not exclude occasional releases and changes. The obsessive idea can be modified and qualified in cases of emergency and in the interest of opportunistic reasons. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is certainly unconditional in Christian ethics, but it can be suspended, as the Crusades and the mass executions of heretics, Moslems and Jews by the Holy Inquisition prove. For sacred purposes it is not only allowed but commendable to kill.

The unconscious inhibition forbidding me to write the Mahler book was at first certainly severe and unconditional. At the time I discovered it (with the help of Freud's dream interpretation), it had already taken a new shape. It had been revised. The original idea was: If I write the book, I shall die (after its completion). The secondary form of the obsessive idea, as it now was recognized, was: If I write and finish the book before I reach the age of fifty-one, I shall die. Or positively put: I was allowed to write the book after having reached my fifty-first year. But that was the age at which Abraham died and by a strange coincidence also the age at which Mahler died. It seemed that I considered the magical danger was banned after I had passed that critical age at which my admired and envied teacher had succumbed to his illness. In other words, the inner command was now that I had to wait until the end of my fifty-first year to undertake the writing of the book.

When I discovered the origin and motives of my writer's block, I was forty-four years old and I was determined to brush aside all this neurotic nonsense and to begin to work on the study. There was more than one rebellion against the tyranny of a superstitious illusion against which everything—or almost everything—in me struggled! I let myself be pushed by an obsessional idea so far and no farther, I said to myself. I had then the naïveté—an excellent quality which I shared with some of the most sophisticated and clever New York psychoanalysts—to believe it would be easy to conquer an inhibition and to overcome an obsessive fear when I fully understood its origin and motives. The house of these neurotic symptoms was shaken, but it did not collapse. As a matter of fact, it withstood the storms and assaults of reason in the following years. Withered by age and crumbled by analytic insights, it needed another and stronger fear to come down.

FIVE

I spent the following years in writing other books and I collected added biographical material on Mahler. When, after having passed fifty, I came to this country, I found a new impulse for my research into Mahler's life: I wanted to find out how he lived here between 1907 and 1911 and I used the opportunity of studying his activities in the U. S. and of seeing people who had known him here.[7] I had passed my fifty-first year and had not started to write that book. I understood then that the old inhibition and magic fear had continued and had even returned to its original form, namely, to the concept that I would die if I wrote that book. I made several unsuccessful attempts at overcoming the block, but the invisible obstacle remained in its old power.

Finally a new fear arose in me, and this emotional agency was forceful enough to break the old stronghold. This new fear, stealing upon me imperceptibly, had the formula: I would die before I had written and finished the book. It was easy enough to brush this new thought aside and even consider that possibility, unperturbed ("So what?"). But the idea had all the characteristics of an obsessive fear and demanded to be listened to as the old fear. I soon recognized that here was a counterfear, a counterobsession, as forceful as the

[7] While people were friendly to him, his colleagues, the musicians and the music critics, showed a distinct antagonism. His symphonies were not understood and he was not as highly appreciated as Toscanini who was hostile to him.

original one and much more justifiable. How long could I afford to wait? While the old anxiety had blocked my way, the new one seemed to press me forward. The old one had seemed to say: "What's the hurry? You have oceans of time," the new one seemed to proclaim: "It is later than you think." As superstitious and magical in its character as the original obsessive idea, it did not keep me away from productive activity, but stimulated it, made me impatient to start and to finish the work so long postponed. At the same time it gave me an even more penetrating insight into the fear that had held me back for a quarter of a century: in my superstitious thinking the renunciation of writing that book was a kind of guarantee that I would continue to live, was, so to speak, the premise of my survival, as the completion of it menaced me with annihilation.

As the old magical fear had became associated with the number 51 in my thought, the new form of the obsessive thought was connected with a number: it had occurred to me that I should finish the book before my sixty-fifth birthday, which means before May, 1953. In this formulation, this appears as a casual or whimsical thought, in reality it was as imperative and compulsive as the original fear about the fifty-first year. It had only the character of a counter-obsession; instead of "You must not," the present formula was "You have to." There a forbidding, here an order, the first as magical in its character as the second. I have an inkling of a notion, also, as to why I choose my sixty-fifth birthday as the deadline for the completion of the book. My father died before his sixty-sixth birthday, and I approached his age with the thought I would perhaps not reach it. The sixty-fifth birthday gave, so to speak, a safety clause.

In the week between Christmas and New Year's of 1951, I began to look for all my folders, books and articles, for the notes on my own experience and that of Mahler and to put them in order. While doing that, it occurred to me that it was just twenty-five years since that week in which the chorale melody had haunted me, twenty-five years after Abraham's death. "Enough reverence and regard, enough, too much, of atonement and self-sabotage!" I thought. The old idea that I would die after having completed the book on Mahler had lost its hold over me. Yes, I was even ready to face this possibility with some serenity. An anecdote I had not thought of since high-school days occurred to me. The great Prussian King, Friedrich the Second, once shouted at his grenadiers who, under the furious fire

of the enemy, took to flight: "You dogs, do you want to live eternally?" Put into the singular and varied into American vernacular, I asked myself in self-irony that indignant question. And then I settled down to start writing the book I had successfully avoided writing for twenty-five years. It will be finished before my sixty-fifth birthday because the draft will be finished today.

Different thoughts and emotions which had nothing to do with the job at hand accompanied my writing. As memories crowded on me, I wondered about that stranger who had been I twenty-five years ago. "Time, you thief!" I thought. "You have stolen so many fine and intense feelings from me: that burning ambition, that eagerness to achieve something remarkable, the power of love and the force of hate! What did you make of my life?"

Together with such regrets I could smile at the young man who had been haunted by that melody "I shall die to live . . ." and who had one day dreamed that his name would be remembered by future generations. . . . How foolish of Mahler, that man of genius, to enjoy the hope that his works would be appreciated and loved long after his death! What does it matter to him now that his symphonies are more and more frequently performed even in New York, where music critics made fun of them when he lived here? I remember that Arthur Schnitzler, who had known and admired Mahler, and I once passed on a walk the Grinzinger Cemetery where they buried the composer in May, 1911. As a kind of wise and ironic comment, a sentence someone says in one of Schnitzler's plays came to mind: "Posterity exists only for the living."

Yet looking back I have to admit that that juvenile thirst for fame, that foolish hope, was one of the leitmotifs of my life. As a melody is born from germinal phrases and foliates and develops in response to the life force within them, thus that intense drive originated in early impressions, became an organic entity whose inner power made itself felt until it receded with old age. It was not accidental that that melody from the Second Symphony had once haunted me.

While writing this book, I heard from time to time with the inner ear themes from Mahler's songs and symphonies. They were the accompanying music to my march back into the past. There was, of course, that chorale, the haunting melody, from the Second Symphony, or rather a faint echo of it when I tried to describe the ex-

perience of that Christmas week of 1925. When I went farther back in my memories to early years and earlier aspirations, to the age when I went out into the world full of hopes and expectations to conquer it, I seem to hear some cuckoo calls and then the tune *"Ging heute morgen über's Feld"* ("As I wandered o'er the fields") from the First Symphony. Many other tunes came to mind until as the last the wonderful first movement of the Ninth Symphony emerged, that stirring *Kindertotenlied* that the composer sang for himself.

Emerging from those haunted grounds and arriving at the end of this study, I suddenly remember that I often daydreamed that it would become a "great" book. It became nothing of the kind, only a fair contribution to the psychology of unconscious processes. Yet as such it presents a new kind of recording of those inner voices which otherwise remain mute.

In revising this study, I have again followed its themes and counter-themes and their elaboration. I know the score. But, as Mahler used to say, the most important part of music is not in the notes.

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THE HAUNTING MELODY

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By Theodor Reik

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